ライオットグラスパー

～異世界でスキル盗ってます～

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1 飛鳥けい

MFブックス

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Riot Grasper Chapter 1

I died. I suddenly died.

How? I'm ashamed of saying it.

'I died protecting my family' — would have been a cool thing to say.

Accidental death. It was an accidental death.

Not interesting, right?
Yeah, but I wasn't interesting in the first place, so what's the big deal?

I was cocky. I know that it was wrong and I regret it now.

After all, I had finally overcome the university entrance exam, albeit barely.
Wasn't it my right to be even a tiny bit happy?

Yet I was run over… by a truck.

『Such a handsome guy. To think that he died.』

Good development it would have been if that were the case but it was not.
You would need outrageous luck to remain handsome after getting run over by a truck. I was not that lucky.

Fu~n, the bumper of the truck… became a food processor. That's how it felt.
Those who are eating at the moment, I apologize.

After having watched such a miserable me for a while from the sky, I seem to have migrated to the realm of afterlife.

Overcome by a strange floating sensation, engulfed in pure white space, I'm in front of what resembles a municipal office.

Is this the realm of afterlife?
Nope, there's something written on the gate.

『Reincarnation procedure, here ↓』

It's that, right? That stereotypical reincarnation? Yeah, I know.

Currently, I'm sitting idly on a sofa, looking at the reception desk which has『Earth』written on it.

(I did die back there, didn't I? So, what now?)

While I was thinking that, with my head down in gloom, someone called out to me.
It's gloomy here yet that voice was contrastingly bright.

「Aww~, you died, right? That's awful.」
「Well, I'm sorry that I died. And who might you be?」
「Oops, I'm a staff member of Reincarnation Control Centre. Well then, have you decided on the destination world after you reincarnate?」
「Well, I have yet to understand things.」
「You do? Okay then, which world did you come from?」
「Japan, Earth…」

Upon my words, the male staff member 「I see~」 nods his head. He's a difficult-to-understand type of person. His age seems to be… about 20 years?

「Earth is quite popular. Furthermore, Japan's acceptance rate is pretty high~. By the way, how about a world other than Earth?」
「Eh? Is there such a world?」
「There is~. Of course there is~. So, are you interested?」

Am I interested? Of course I am… but this man doesn't seem to be serious. Is it really alright?

「Nah, if I can be reincarnated, I would like to go back to Earth, I think.」
「What did you say!? It's another world! A world of swords and magic! A fantasy world!」
「R-Really? Hey, think about it. Isn't a world of swords and magic really dangerous to live in? In Japan, if you can secure top position in occupations ranking, you can become a《Public Servant》which can provide you with financial stability in such an era as this.」
「Don't! Don't say anything. Even if you do, there's no use~ the quota is fixed. Quota.」

Quota? Like filling?

「You understand that there are many worlds, right? Every world has a fixed quota in respect of the number of people in order to maintain balance. Also, it's about time for the change of shifts. Do you know what would happen if they find out that I couldn't handle even one person? Terrible~.」

While lamenting, he peeks at me through the gaps between his fingers.

Why do I smell a lie?
Exactly what kind of god would behave like that?

「N-No… 「Then how about a special service? You will receive one skill of your choice as a present.」 …Eh?」

While I was trying to say something, he shut my mouth with his index finger.
Well, I'm interested in this otherworld anyway.
It does sound interesting.

「I can hear your story… at least.」
「Thank you so~ much. Guide this gentleman, ple~ase.」

Suddenly, a man grabs my arm and pulls me.

The man takes me to another reception desk.『Iris』is written on this reception desk. Which reminds me,『Earth』was written on the previous reception desk. So, is Iris the name of this otherworld?

「Have a seat, please. Let's start right away. First, your present as a special service.」
「O-Okay.」
「Here's the keyboard. Type whichever word you want. I'll give you the description of the skills in the search results. Feel free to use it, please.」

Why is there a keyboard!? And why is there a Liquid Crystal Display!?

「Ah~, it materializes as something which is easy-to-recognize for you. Don't pay any mind to it.」

Does it? So, if someone from another world were here in my place, would it materialize as a crystal ball?
Alright, let's set that aside and search something. I'm grateful for the fact that it's easy

What- Superhuman!?

If I…

「Umm, this service allows me choose just one skill?」
「That's right~ it's special, you know? You're the only one who's receiving this service.」

Stock scam phrase.
Hopeless. Absolutely hopeless.

「This service let's you choose one skill. However, the skill someone possesses is decided by their birth. In other words, it depends on their race. Even if you choose a skill, it's not necessary that you'll get that skill.」

Fumu, is there no skill in this world which let's you gain other skills?
I should stop being double-minded.

After all, a true man is always straight.

Alright, next.

『Martial arts』

I type.

・Sword Arts Lv1
・Spear Arts Lv1
・Axe Arts Lv1
・Archery Lv1
・Body Arts Lv1
・Stick Arts Lv1
–…

It goes on and on. The problem is, I have to choose only one.

『Resistance』

・Abnormal Status Resistance Lv1
・Mental Disorder Resistance Lv1
・Fire Attribute Resistance Lv1
–…

…Un, I'm so troubled. I can't decide on one.

Thereafter, I typed in numerous keywords but found nothing of interest.

So, should I give up on it?

While I was thinking that, I unintentionally-

『 』

-Searched a blank.

・Thief's Godly Skill Lv1

And this is what came up.

「Excuse me, what kind of skill is this?」
「–This…?」
「Yeah, it seems to be good. Please give me its details.」
「That'll be difficult~. Do you really want me to? Okay, this is… a hidden skill. How did you come across it anyway~? Err… it'll be too much to explain for a mouth. Wait a bit… there you go.」

Inside my head, some words float up.
That's convenient, hey!

Thief's Godly Skill (Riot Grasper)
Can steal any skill from the owner of the skill.
The level of the stolen skill shall be same as when the skill was stolen. It is possible to train the stolen skill.
Following are the conditions of invocation:
① The skill to be stolen must be known and visually confirmed.
② The body of the target to be plundered must be in contact at the time of invocation.
※ Success Rate: 10% × Skill Level
※ (Total Lv of All your Skills Combined – Lv of the Skill to be Stolen) × 1% shall be added to the success rate. (No change in case of negative resultant number)
※ In case of failure, the same skill of the same target shall be permanently disqualified for invocation.
※ Usage limit per day: Depends on the skill Lv.
※ The stolen skill can be returned to the original owner.

Oh my god!
I've found a hidden skill.

I can smell it! I can smell it! I can smell strong Middle School 2nd Year Syndrome, eeee!
This is it!

「Th-This Rio- Thief's Godly Skill… Even if the person – whom the skill is stolen from – dies, the stolen skill will not be lost, right?」
「That's right~. The owner changes for all purposes.」
「There's a formula that mentions skill Lv. It means the Lv of Thief's Godly Skill, right? Also, what does 'total Lv of all your skills combined' mean…?」
「Un, for example, you have Thief's Godly Skill Lv1 and Sword Arts Lv1. In this case, the total

Lv of all your skills combined will be 2. Now, let's say, you are trying to steal Fire Magic Lv1. Basic success rate in your case will be 10%. Add to it the difference × 1%, the success rate will be 11%. Do you get it?」

I'm actually more confused.

「By the way, the total number of skills you can possess is limited to 10. It depends on race, though. So, would you like choose this skill?」
「Ye- no… Wait a minute, please.」

Let's think about it carefully. Invocation condition ① The skill to be stolen must be known and visually confirmed. Isn't it impossible? How would I know as to who possesses which skill? And I can't plunder people indiscriminately, right…?

「What's the matter~? To tell you the truth, there's no need to think for you don't get to choose☆ To the otherworld YOU GO!」
「Hey, I still haven't decided if I'll go to another world!」
「It's too late to say that. Take this present, too. The otherworld, here he comes!」

Unique: Scholar's Knowledge (Can appraise status and items)

Owa! I'm being forcibly teleported.
Well, isn't it actually amazing?
Isn't it a perfect combo?

「–Reincarnating in Iris.」

Thus, my connection to Earth was finally severed. With my heart jumping inside my chest, I was being reincarnated in another world.

「Thank you for choosing us~! Well then, let's quickly get the procedure completed.」

I wasn't scammed, right? It's gonna be okay, right?

「Which race and gender would you like?」
「Race? What choices do I have?」

・Humans: Extremely high population in Iris. Balanced faction. Individual differences considerable.
・Dwarves: Skillful fingers. Suited to be artisan. Incredible strength.
・Beastkin: Cats, dogs, wolves, lions, etc.; Comprises various kinds. Enhanced physical abilities.
・Elves: The people of the forest. Possess plenteous magic aptitude. Suited to be rearguard.
・Dragonewts: A race that pursues different evolutionary system from the dragons. Tough. Extremely low population.

・Demons: Hostile relationship with almost rest of the races. Superior in terms of abilities. Not recommended to a novice.

「This is basically it, so~」

Ah, the man opens his mouth before long. It's bothersome. Surely.
I mean, hey! Demon? Really?
And it's not recommended!

「Umm, demon…」
「–So, is this what you want to choose?」
「No… I choose dragonewt.」

Because I could smell danger, I circumvent. But why drago-something?
I can't even say it properly. How embarrassing.
It's a dragon with a name… right?

「What about sex~?」
「Err… male.」

Man, of course.
I don't even want to imagine being a woman, making out with men.

「Al~right! With this, the procedure is complete. Well then… See yaaa.」
「Wait, isn't there a manual… or an explanation about this otherworld?」
「Actually, you… will be reincarnated as a baby. Therefore, even if I explained it to you now, it'd be of no use to you in the otherworld. Also, explaining it to you is not part of my job, so~」
「Reincarnated — as a baby?」
「I know, right?」

I misheard it, right?

「I knew it — I want to reincarnate in a safe world. I can't- I won't enjoy such a world. It's so absurd that I'm trembling.」
「That!? Eee! Again? But it's about time for another change of shifts… and I need to achieve my quota with you.」
「Well, sorry.」

「–Good! …Well then, you will now reincarnate in the otherworld with the current settings. There YOU go☆」

How is it good!?

「In that case, I want to choose human race… can I?」
「E~h…」
「Actually, this is the only way that doesn't require you to start over as a baby~.」

「Well… human is even better, then…」

It's extremely regrettable but there's no other way.

「Fuu… alright, if that's your decision. Well then — take care.」

All of a sudden, I was in a man's hands. At the same time, my vision blacked out and I lost consciousness.

「U…n」
「Hey!」
「E…?」
「Hey, are you alright, hey!?」

My head is all muddled up.
It all feels like a dream.

–To think that there was a time when I was like that.

「Have you finally woken up? How long have you been lying here?」

The first thing I saw in this otherworld is moustache and beard of a burly middle-aged man.
Ee, it's an unforgettable experience that I'd rather forget.

I was sent to this otherworld for this?
No, I must see things from various angles.
From my angle and from others' angle.

Name: Seiji・Agatsuma
Race: Human
Age: 18
Job: None
Unique: Scholar's Knowledge
Skill(s)
・Thief's Godly Skill (Riot Grasper) Lv1 (0/10)

Name: Nicholas・Hoffman
Race: Human
Age: 35
Job: Sentinel
Skill(s)
・Sword Arts Lv2 (24/50)
・Body Arts Lv1 (6/10)

Well then

1st Volume, 2nd Chapter【The Beginner's Town, Merville】

「Excuse me——where is this place?」

It was supposed to be my first conversation in this otherworld. Yet it is so pathetic.

「Where?……It can be considered Merville town, I guess.」

My reaction is just what you would expect from someone who's hearing a name for the first time——

「……I see.」
「By the way, this area, where a certain someone was lying unconscious, is outside the town wall. Also, I don't have time to dawdle around. If you can move your body, get inside the town.」

Body……When he mentions 'body', I take a look at my own body.

Although I can't see my face, I'm sure that it doesn't look like minced meat. Also, from the way this old-man is talking to me, I can assume that I'm a human.
When I touch all over my body, I immediately realize that there's no change in my body from how it was in my previous life.

Rather than reincarnation, it feels more like revival.

My clothes, however, are totally different. There's a jute jacket? Underneath is a shirt. Trousers are made of something stiff, like cotton? Pelted boots complete the rustic look.
Where are my comfortable shoes which I had on at the time of the accident? Also, other luggage, which I had at that time, doesn't seem to be with me.

「You……Are you really alright?」

Rather, it's a big relief that I can understand and speak their language.
So that staff member actually did something useful, huh?

Considering the fact that this old-man looks worried after seeing me acting strangely, he doesn't seem to be as strict as he appears.

「Ah, I'm sorry. I'm kinda confused. Umm, what was it called, again? Merville town?」

When I look around to inspect my surroundings, I immediately notice an extraordinary stone wall.
As for its height, I'm around 175cm tall……and it's about twice my height? It's quite prominent. So this is the town wall of Merville, huh?

A town wall is erected in order to defend from the enemies outside.

There must exist fantasy creatures outside, I guess.

Or should I rather say demon race, perhaps?

「Like I feared……monsters……exist.」
「True. However, the town wall of Merville is quite sturdy. You'll be prone to attack if you step outside, though. Were you perhaps……not aware of it? Did you encounter any monster along the way? You don't seem to have any luggage with you.」

Does he perhaps think that I was attacked by a monster and I managed to escape with just my body intact?
Because I have no other choice, I'll just keep on nodding.

「Such a terrible place. I have lost everything I had.」
「Is that so?……That really is terrible. N? You haven't lost your ID, have you? If you want to enter the town, it will be required.」
「……」

Oh, god. If I'll have to spend my first night camping outside, I quit.

「What do I do now?」
「What can you do now?……That's right——Hey, do you know about the Adventurer's Guild?」
「Just the name.」

It's mandatory in case of another world. However, because I was preparing for entrance test, I didn't read many manga or novels. Not even during the breaks.

「If you get registered with the guild, the guild guarantees you a position in the society. The guild issues a guild card. It acts as a substitute for ID. However, if you tarnish the guild's image with your actions, it will lead to terrible consequences. Well then, if you want to enter the town, I can take you to the guild.」
「Money……Won't I need money?」
「They can issue you a loan. Since it's an emergency, there won't be any problem, hopefully.」
「T-Thank you very much.」
「And this is where I work. I'm Nicholas・Hoffman. I'm a sentinel of this town.」
「I'm Agatsuma・Seiji.」

I extend my hand out to shake with his. The skin of his hand felt rugged.
So his skill, Sword Arts Lv2, isn't for show, huh?
……What was it called, again? Intermediate?

「Agatsuma……huh? Quite an unusual name.」
「Ah, no, my name is Seiji.」

I see. So the given name comes first, huh?

「Hoffman-san, are you good with sword?」
「N? Just call me Nicholas. A kid need not be worried about honorifics.」

Kid, huh?
Well, a mere high school student is a kid, surely; but to suddenly call an elder by their first name without any honorifics is, somewhat, repugnant.

「Sword, huh? I have been training my sword for fairly long. Unlike adventurers, the opportunities to fight against different monsters here are not that many. Therefore, experiencing a real battle is rare.」

While saying so, Nicholas-san draws his sword from its sheath with burning eyes and slashes at the sky.
Quite a performance it was. The way he put the sword back to its sheath with a brisk sound looked cool to an ordinary person like me.

「If a monster dares attack this town, I'll cut it down with this sword of mine.」
「Indeed.」

Invocation condition ① is already clear, isn't it?
It can be invoked if I touch.

However, I hold my hand, which was about to touch Nicholas-san, back.
There's no need to be impatient, really.
I honestly want to test it as soon as possible. However, I would not like to plunder someone who helped me. Without Sword Arts skill, Nicholas-san will become weak. If he were to be killed by a monster consequently, I would not be able to sleep in peace.

What the fuck? This skill is unexpectedly difficult to use.
W-Well, it has only just begun.
First, let's think it over.

・Even if I try to steal a skill, will I be successful?
・Even if I successfully steal the skill, will I be able to use it?
・How many times can I use the skill per day if it's Lv1?
・How do I raise the level of the skill?

Four questions too many.

That said, there's no other choice but to try it out eventually. But first, I have to get registered with the guild and secure accommodation for today. I have to do something about money, too. It's disturbing that I don't have any.

Fortunately, the sun is still up. There are still a few hours left.
I may be able to earn some without getting myself into danger.

The South Gate of the town was the closest to the location where I was. After having walked with Nicholas-san for about ten minutes, I can now see the gate.
After walking along the town wall for quite a while, I realized that this town is actually huge.
For the town wall can be traced to be round, is the structure of the town circular?

Because I was with Nicholas-san, I almost passed through the South Gate.
Nicholas-san calls out to the sentry stationed at the gate and explains my situation, after which, we enter the town.

「Ooh……」

Merville's townscape comprises mostly of stone-made buildings. Wooden houses can be found here and there. Streets are stone-paved. Private residences have vividly-colored, triangular roofs. It looks like a fusion of medieval and contemporary Europe.

The reason as to why I said contemporary Europe is that earthquakes are scarce in Europe, so the old constructions still exist there.

Before you start arguing, I must tell you that I only know all this from the pictures on the internet. You can't expect a high school student to have actually toured Europe.

From the first glance, the town looks clean.
……There's no horseshit on the streets!

Now then, I must pull myself together and go to the guild.
Merville town is divided into different districts; including Commercial District, Residential District and Industrial District. The Adventurer's Guild is located in the Commercial District which is situated in the southern part of the town.
For this reason, We, who entered the town from the South Gate, reached the guild before long.

There's an orthodox signboard, featuring a shield and crossed swords——This must be the signboard of the Adventurer's Guild. It's a splendid, two-storied, stone-made building.
Nicholas-san will probably go back after my registration is done and I receive my guild card.
He may look rough and scary but honestly, I'm glad that he's with me.

When I open the door, what I find in front is a municipal office which looks similar to the one I saw in the realm of afterlife. Nope, this one seems to be inferior in quality compared to that one. On the counter, the silhouette of a receptionist lady, or a man, can be seen dealing with the visitors. On the bulletin board, many quests can be found stuck. This place is brimming with liveliness.
It might have looked wild at first——but it's actually not.

Well, it's still a bit frightening but it can't be helped. I approach the receptionist lady on the counter.

「Umm, I would like to register with the Adventurer's Guild.」
「Very well. Is this your first time in the guild?」
「Yes.」

The receptionist lady takes a seat to conduct my interview. Nicholas-san is behind me, observing the state of my affairs.

「Well then, please fill your name, age and race in this form.」

When I was about fill in the blanks, my pen stops.
Which letters do I write in?

The moment I thought that, the content I was trying to write floats up inside my head in the letters of this world.

Huh? This is convenient.

After filling in the required information, I return the form to the receptionist lady.

「Okay, good enough. Well then, the registration fee is 1,000 Dalas.」
「I……I don't have any money. I heard that I could borrow some from the guild.」
「Yes, you can. If you repay it within one month, no interest shall be charged. Well then, what would you like to do?」

A high school student in debt……The more the time passes, the more it feels like another world.

「Okay.」
「Well then, the procedure… huh?」
「Is something wrong?」
「Your age is 18 years……Excuse my rudeness, are you sure there's no mistake?」
「Eh? Yes, there's no mistake.」

When I heard a surprised voice leak out from behind me, I turn around to find wide-eyed Nicholas-san. The receptionist lady was astonished just as well.

「Pardon my rudeness. Are you not younger?」
「I thought that you were 14-15 years old.」

The facial features of Nicholas-san and the receptionist lady are indeed strong. Although not completely, they resemble westerners. On the contrary, compared to westerners, orientals look younger than their age.

……Indirectly, they're telling me that I have a baby-face, huh?

「I'm 18 years old.」

「Pardon my rudeness, again. Well then, let me brief to you about the Adventurer's Guild next.」
「Okay.」
「At the Adventurer's Guild, we receive numerous quests on a daily basis. I will have you note that the guild acts as an intermediary between a client and an adventurer. For this reason, the guild deducts a fee from the reward at the completion of a quest. In return, the guild bears full responsibility for the quest. In case the client objects the deficiency in the completion of the quest, unless the adventurer recognizes their fault, the guild provides full

protection——You can receive security against loss.」

Well, agency model is pretty common but there's protection, too, huh?

「In case the adventurer is at fault, the reward amount shall be compensated by the adventurer as a penalty. Therefore, please be careful in that regard.」

The entire reward amount shall be compensated?……Isn't that harsh?

「Also, a rank is assigned to the adventurer. From S+, S, S- to E+, E, E- in descending order. If your rank is high, you can receive designated quests. Well then, aim to be a trusted adventurer.」

How much can a rank S+ earn? Well, I will first have to earn enough to survive in this world. I can think about making a fortune later.

「Seiji-san will start as a rank E-. As for the quests, you can either choose routine work downtown or you can collect medicinal herbs in the outskirts. During the collection of the medicinal herbs, you may encounter weak monsters. Is Seiji-san able to fight?」
「I……will learn.」
「I understand. Please be careful and try not to encounter any monster.」

Come to think of it, do monsters possess skills, too?
If so, then I can steal the skills from the monsters without any hesitation.
However, unless I plan my first step, I'm not sure if I can kill even the weakest of the monsters.
For the time being, I better not step outside the town.
I should probably receive quests relating to routine work downtown.

「Your rank increases once upon the completion of every ten quests. In case you fail to complete a quest, the protection against the penalty depends on your quest completion rate. In addition, you'll have to pass a test in order to raise your rank beyond D. E+ to D-, D+ to C- and so on can, therefore, be considered stages.」

Err… written test?

「Because the monster subjugation quests tend to be available to those beyond rank D, we conduct the test to ascertain that they have the ability to fight against the monsters.」

No surprises there~.

「Well then, we will now issue you the guild card. The cost of the first issuance is included in the registration fee. However, any subsequent issuance shall cost you 500 dalas. Please be informed.」

After saying that, the receptionist lady goes inside and comes back after a while with something, which looks like a silver metal plate, in her hands.
When I press my finger on the back of the card, as I was asked, a mysterious light 'poo'

comes off it.

「This is Seiji-san's guild card. Welcome to the Adventurer's Guild.」
「Y-Yes, likewise. Please take care of me.」

I'm happy, somewhat.
I'm in debt now, though.

「Umm, Nicholas-san, here.」
「Ah, your identification. Welcome to Merville town, finally. I hope you earn enough to make a fresh start.」

After saying that, Nicholas-san leaves the guild. Was it alright for him, a sentinel, to leave the gate for this long?

「Umm, I can accept quests from now on, right?」
「Of course. You can have a look at the quests posted on the bulletin board there.」
「Umm, can you please recommend me an inn in this area? Also, how much will the accommodation cost be?」

The receptionist lady smiles gently at the penniless adventurer in front of her.
Now I've done it.

「Hmm, let me think. Right, considering the reward of a rank E- quest, the inn I would recommend to you would be《Feeder Pops'》.」

Well, taking into account the amount of money I have in hand, she's not gonna recommend me a big name hotel where pretty girls are at your service.
It's gonna be an inn with a stinking old-man!

I express my gratitude to the receptionist lady and head to the bulletin board.

Hmm, rank E- quests……

『Warehouse Rearrangement: Quest Reward – 200 Dalas』
『Supplementary Personnel for Public Works: Quest Reward – 250 Dalas』

And so on……Nothing but trivial work.
Is there really no helping it?
Well, the battle skill of the current me is zero, after all.

The moment I stretch my hand out to remove a quest paper——jeers and boos resound inside the building.

「Hey, what are kids doing here?! ……A~h, accepting trivial work for a quest, eh?! You're a disgrace to us adventurers! Off to your home, take a shit and go to your bed!」

Err… he's quite pissed off, clearly.

Uttering such words, two men, who resemble the motorbikers from a certain end-of-century comic, head my way.

Well, what else would you say to a novice, with a baby-face no less, who has already been suspected to be 14-15 years old.

「Umm, err… I need to receive a quest to cover accommodation expense.」
「Did you hear that, guys?! A boy who doesn't even have the balls to fight a monster has registered to be an adventurer! Does he think so low of us adventurers?」

They carry on. Help, someone?
Apparently, the guild staff doesn't arbitrate a quarrel between two adventurers. When I look toward the receptionist lady from earlier with pleading eyes, she was troubled to open her mouth.

So an adventurer is supposed to help themselves, huh?
I don't mean to show off or anything but in my previous life, I happened to dabble in Karate.
But then, why have I not been granted the Body Arts skill?
Do I have no talent? Should I cry?

That aside, I should first check their status. Take it easy. There's no need to be worried.
There's indeed a need to be worried.

Name: Bal・Goliath
Race: Human
Age: 32
Job: Adventurer (Rank B+)
Skill(s)
・Axe Arts Lv2 (47/50)
・Physical Abilities Enhancement Lv3 (4/150)

Name: Zac・Keynes
Race: Human
Age: 28
Job: Adventurer (Rank C+)
Skill(s)
・Spear Arts Lv2 (35/50)
・Body Arts Lv1 (8/10)

It was obvious that they were high ranking adventurers but their ranks are too damn high!
It's not good to bully a weak.
Well then, what do I do now? I can't resort to violence in the guild, after all.

How about I give ‘it’ a go, then?

「No, that’s not it. But if I don’t accept this quest……」
「I don’t fucking care! Don’t you get it?」

Bal slams his fist on a table.
He bent massive, cm-thick wood out of shape? Is he a gorilla, hey?

Thereafter, Bal heads my way and shoves me into the wall with his arm.
It hurts. I’m gonna die.

「You listening? If I ever see this face here, I’m going to beat it out of shape! You get that, asshole?! Hey, Zac, let’s go. Kuahahaha——N? What, you wanna do something about it, piece of shit?!」

Just like that, with vulgar laughter, the pair leaves the guild.

「——Gehogeho……u……gu」

If it’s someone like them, I won’t have any guilty conscience.

「Are you okay? I’m extremely sorry. The guild has a no-intervention policy in respect of a quarrel between two adventurers. Besides, if they were half as strong as they act, they wouldn’t leave so many quests incomplete……Still, if it escalates any further, the guild will issue them a warning——」

At the receptionist lady’s words, I gesture with my hand for her to stop.

I have got the basic idea.
Even if you touch the target, this skill won’t invoke until and unless you call for it.
Furthermore, you have to touch the target’s skin. If you touch the armor, it won’t work.
Finally, at Lv1, the number of times you can invoke this skill per day is at least two.

How lucky! At first attempt with just 10%.
As for axe-handling, since it wasn’t visually confirmed, it was futile.

「Wa……wawa, I’m fine. Moving on……I want to receive an easy quest since-!」

A shattering sound resounds inside the building.
This time, the sturdy wooden-table, which I try to rest my hands on, breaks under the force.
Amidst the dancing sawdust, I could feel an incredible power welling up inside my body.

《Physical Abilities Enhancement Lv3》 huh?
Isn’t it overwhelming?
Of course it is!

——Thereafter, the cost of the broken table was added to my debt, it goes without saying. I offer an earnest apology to the receptionist lady.

Name: Seiji・Agatsuma
Race: Human
Age: 18
Job: Adventurer (Rank E-)
Unique: Scholar's Knowledge
Skill(s)
・Thief's Godly Skill (Riot Grasper) Lv1 (1/10)
・Physical Abilities Enhancement Lv3 (4/150)

I have stolen a skill――――――――――!

1st Volume, 3rd Chapter【The Expert Blacksmith, Jig・Salman】

No matter how strong of a skill it is, stealing is an inhumane act.
Making it unexpectedly difficult. (Author's note)

「Well then, I would like to receive this delivery of goods quest……」
「Very well. With the herculean strength you displayed moments ago, you shouldn't have any problem in completing the quest, I believe. The place is located outside Commercial District; it's located in the east, in Industrial District. I will mark the location on the map. You will receive further directions on site. Also……please don't forget to pay 1,500 Dalas within one month.」

So the compensation has been duly added. Un, whatever, it was I who broke the table in the end, after all.

At any rate, this Physical Abilities Enhancement skill seems to be Continuous Activation type. My body is clearly light. My strength has welled up as well. And my speed is remarkably different from before.

While considering possibilities, I call for my status and concentrate my consciousness on the skill.

《Physical Abilities Enhancement》——Enhances physical abilities. Increases the original physical abilities by a percentage. The synergistic effect is similar to that of physical training. If proficiency is high, the gap of physical abilities between races can be surpassed. Excellent compatibility with martial arts.

Ah, something came up. This……skill is quite useful. Great.
Is it rare? Oh well, its usability will depend on the combination of skills.
In short, the usefulness of this ability……will vary from person to person.

Huh? Have I just raised another hurdle for myself? Another hurdle.

Ahem……This is the story of a protagonist who was reincarnated in another world. The light-hearted story of how he enjoys his life in that otherworld. Please refrain from associating excessive expectations.

What a massive idiot I am. Where was Industrial District again? East?

It's all thanks to that muscle balloon……Balloon? Was it? I must thank him.
I have no idea as to how weakened he would be after losing his skill. Well, he was all muscles anyway……so it shouldn't be that bad.

I mean, if you compare our physique, I'm a frail guy. It was he who struck the table first and almost broke the table.

——The value next to Thief's Godly Skill has changed to (1/10). Most likely, the proficiency of the skill increases with every success. As it is now, the success rate is unspeakably low.

In order to increase the success rate, I need to increase the total Lv of all my skills combined. In order to increase the total Lv of all my skills combined, I need high Lv skills even if they're unnecessary. In order to obtain high Lv skills, I need to increase the success rate.
That said, can I really afford to have unnecessary skills with the limit of 10?
If the number of my skills exceeds 10, will they be discarded?……Well, I have just one skill at the moment, so I don't need to go that far, do I?

For now, I best increase the proficiency of the skill steadily.
Also, whom I steal the skill from is important.
First, I need to confirm whether the monsters possess skills.

Whatever, that I don't have skills doesn't mean that I can't fight.
In the first place, that staff member never said that I should give up. With this physical ability, if I were to get injured by a weak monster……

——Oh well, my priority should be completing the quest.

「Aah, are you an adventurer? Nice to meet you. I'm a merchant called Batteau. Coming to the point, I want you to deliver these packages to an artisan in the Industrial District.」
「I'm Seiji. Nice to meet you, too.」
「It's quite heavy. Will you……be alright?」
「Can I try it? ……Ho!」

I try to lift one of the cartons. It is heavy, indeed.
However……

「I can carry about two at a time. In total……there are ten.」
「……I'm still not as mature a merchant to be able to judge someone from their appearance, it seems. Here is the map. I have marked the location of the artisan's workshop. Would you, please?」
「Yes.」

Meanwhile, I check the status of the merchant.

As for the skills, he has Business Acumen Lv2 and Sword Arts Lv1. Sword Arts skill is at the lowest level. It's only for self-defense, most likely.

How do I visually confirm Business Acumen skill? By witnessing him cracking a big deal?
……No, I don't intend to particularly steal this skill. I'll be in trouble if I make stealing a habit.

Thereafter, I made several round trips to Industrial District and delivered the cartons. The quest went smoothly.
When I deliver the last carton and look around for a while, I realize from the exterior of the shop that the artisan is a blacksmith who makes weapons and armors.

So, if I?

Nah, it's blacksmith we are talking about, right? One who hammers hot iron, who forges steel, who shapes it into a strong sword! Who is black! Who is rough! Whose dick is numb!

……This job is no good.

「Excuse me. I was sent here by Batteau-san. I received the delivery of goods quest.〜」

There's no answer.
Is there no one inside?

When I move further in from the sales counter——I reach a place that can be considered the workshop.

「Excuse me——」

——As soon as I say that.

「Don't come here! I can hear you!」

There is someone! But they are 'short' of my expectations. He's bearded and considerably shorter than me.
He's muscular——With this, we have our first dwarf of the series. *A round of applause*

Name: Jig・Salman
Race: Dwarf
Age: 57
Job: Expert Blacksmith
Skill(s)
Smithing Lv4 (54/500)

He's Lv4. Wow! He seems to be quite an excellent blacksmith.

「Don't come inside without permission! Goods……Put the goods there.」
「I'm sorry. I did call for you at the sales counter but……」
「You……are an adventurer? But you are just a kid. Are you looking to die young?」

Because I have my guild card hanging around my neck, he could tell from a glance that I'm an adventurer.
By the way, when I press my finger on the back of card, it shows my name and rank.
Is this some kind of magic?

「Even though I may appear so, I'm actually 18 years old. I just don't prefer to jump into danger needlessly.」
「……What? I thought you were a 10-year-old.」

That's too exaggerated!

Even Jig-san looks considerably younger than his age! Because we belong to different races, however, I can't say for sure.

「It was a joke. Still……As an adventurer, you should have equipment on you even if it's low. It's reckless to fight against monsters as you are.」
「I became an adventurer just today. It's my first quest……Also, because I'm in debt, I can't enjoy the luxury of buying equipment.」
「Fumu……In the future, do you intend to receive quests that require you to fight against monsters?」
「I would receive such quests, I think.」

Appearing bothered, Jig-san stands up and moves to the sales counter, scratching his head all the while.
Did I do something?
For the time being, I follow behind him.

「Hey, is there a weapon you're good at?」
「As of yet, unfortunately none.」
「Fun, in that case, take this. Learn how to use it yourself. It's better than nothing.」

What jig san threw at me is a 50cm long blade attached to a pommel. In other words, a sword. When I pull it out of its sheath, its dark gray luster reflects in my eyes.

《Baselard》——Although it's typically a dagger, its overall length of 50cm makes it a short sword. Because it's lightweight and easy-to-use, even those who are not apt at using swords can use it.

「Are you……giving this to me?」
「It's a parting gift to a fledgling adventurer. Don't think it's free, though. When you grow strong, you have to buy better weapons from this shop……It's just so you don't die young.」

My tear glands were about to burst.

But I manage to hold them back, somehow.
Dying to an accident, reincarnating in this world, meeting a thug……After going through all that, this act of kindness warmed my heart.

Considering Jig-san's words just now, he has all the makings of a Tsundere.

『I-It's not like I'm giving it to you for free, B-Baka. You have to buy expensive goods from my shop in the future. It'll be a waste if you die before that.』 (TN: I added B-Baka myself. It's not in the raw.)

To have Imagined such a thing, I must prostrate and apologize to him.

「Thank you very much.」
「I'm Jig. Well then, do your best.」
「My name is Seiji. I'll be sure to visit again.」

——I leave Jig-san's shop and head back to Batteau-san.
Now that I have delivered the goods, I need him to sign the quest off as complete.

When Batteau-san was signing off the quest, his gaze falls onto the sword on my waist. I received a leather belt, too, from Jig-san to put the sword on.
All I need now is to steal Sword Arts skill.
Should I steal it from Batteau-san or not?

「This sword……can't be Jig-san's work, right?」

You can tell just by looking at it? Business Acumen Lv2, indeed.
Nah, it must not be entirely related to it.

「Yes, I received it as a parting gift for being an adventurer.」
「That's great……Seiji san, do your best as an adventurer henceforth.」

More heartwarming~.

No way, so soon~.
Are most of the people in this town perhaps this nice?

Well, well. Time to go back to the guild, report the completion of the quest and receive the reward. Trivial jobs may be free of risks but take rather long to complete.
The sun is about to set.
I would like to check in an inn before sunset.

In quick strides, I head to Commercial District in the south and open the gate upon reaching the guild.

The receptionist lady's bright smile. My first income in this world. A warm bed.
I'm so excited.

However, the room on the first floor is noisy and surrounded. A silhouette of someone shouting in a familiar, loud voice can be seen.

——No way, so soon~.

1st Volume, 4th Chapter【Feeder Pops'】

In ※ of Thief's Godly Skill
I remember that I wrote, "In case of failure, the same skill of the same target shall be permanently disqualified for invocation." I have revised a part of the 2nd chapter.
Physical Abilities Enhancement was stolen in the first attempt.
The number of times the skill can be invoked in a day at Lv1 has now been revealed. (Author's Note)

「What I'm saying is, push the remaining time limit. That's all!」
「Okay, but you're injured, don't overexert yourself……」
「That's for me to decide. Don't nag.」

Like I suspected, the one shouting at the receptionist lady is the adventurer from earlier in the day.
Bal and Zac, right?
Apparently, Bal's arm is injured. Is that why he couldn't complete the quest……？
This is what I have deduced from the situation.

By the way, this world has an established system in respect of the days.

In Japan, the origin of the days in a week was related to the planet. Here, however, the origin is related to the spirits.
In order: Fire, Water, Wind, Earth, Dark, Light, Origin — are the seven days. One year consists of twelve months including the birth month, making it a 364 days cycle. So I have been told.
For the birth month, various grand festivities are held at the end of the year. Unfortunately, it's currently the fifth month. There's a long way till that.

I was taught the concept by the receptionist lady at the time of receiving the quest in relation to the completion time limit. The time limit for my quest was tomorrow——the day of the Wind.

——Snorting wildly, Bal and company turn around and start walking.
As for me, I'm standing so as to face the wall in order not to make eye contact with them.
I don't want to have any business with them anymore.

I can't afford to have others know that I can steal skills. Thinking back, it was thoughtless of me to hit the table and break it. Still, no one will associate it to stealing skills.

Because there's no way of telling what skills one possesses, there's no way for him to suspect me, I think.
Still, if he accuses me, I'll resist.
Return his skill? Gimme a break.

Ho

Apparently, Mr. Adventurer has no time to spare for a good-for-nothing like me as he glances my way and leaves.

There's nothing left on Bal for me to steal and Zac doesn't have Sword Arts, so there's no use for me in picking a quarrel with them.

「……Is something wrong?」

As the receptionist lady is the only whom I know——I call out to Sheena-san.
She told me her name when I received the quest……because she's a woman, I was trying to refrain from checking her status.
Nah, there's no deep meaning, really. She's 20-year-old beautiful miss with fair skin and chestnut hair, styled into a ponytail. These are the only details that matter.

「Ah, Seiji-san. How did your first quest go?」
「It's complete, so I would be able to sleep in a cozy bed tonight. By the way, those people just now……」
「Yes, those were the same people who picked a quarrel with Seiji-san earlier in the day. We don't normally reveal the circumstances of other adventurers but we can't help it if they make a ruckus and advertise it to others.」
「Did they fail……to complete their quest?」
「No, they have missed the monster that was the subjugation target. At this point, there's still a day left till the time limit, so it can't be considered failure. However, they have suffered an injury, so I proposed them to cancel the quest.」

Is that why he was angry?
Because the guild tries their utmost not to betray the trust of their clients, they prefer for other adventurers to take over a quest if the quest seems impossible for an adventurer.

「They appear to be quite skilled, then how……」
「Yeah, it's a mystery.」

I didn't hear it.

「Umm……are you here to report the completion of the quest?」
「Ah, okay. I'll handle it.」

Sheena-san pulls herself together and starts processing my quest.
The reward of this quest is 300 Dalas.
After she confirms the signature on the quest paper, she hands me three rather big copper coins.
I see. So one big copper coin equals 100 Dalas.

「Umm, I haven't seen excessively large sums of money. What are different coins beside this one?」

To the beginner who asked a question while scratching his head, Sheena-san explains politely without a speck of irritation. Sheena-san looks just like a bewitching goddess.

Apparently, the circulated coins are half copper coin, copper coin, large copper coin, half silver coin, silver coin, half gold coin, gold coin and white gold coin.
Which respectively equal 5, 10, 100, 500, 1,000, 5,000, 10,000 and 100,000 Dalas
Because copper is produced the most in this world, its value is low, somewhat.

「Well then, I'll take this.」

I bow and leave the guild.

I must check in to the inn before it gets dark.
What was the name of the inn again?

Because I haven't eaten anything during the day and am hungry, is that why the inn with such an odd name appears attractive to me?

《Feeder Pops'》

Un, going by the name, I can expect a good meal, at least.
Although there are many inns and similar facilities in Commercial District, I was recommended this place because it's not far from the guild.

From the exterior, it appears to be a three-storeyed, neat building.
I can't say that it's magnificent but it's clean, at least. Not bad.

I enter the inn and survey the first floor.
The walls are milky-white, creating a tranquil ambience.
The first floor seems mainly to be the dining hall and the bar. People can be found in dribs and drabs.

「Can I help you? Are you here to eat? Or to stay?」

Lively voice, cut out for a receptionist. It's a female's voice, not an old-man's.
She's not exactly young, though.

This inn seems to be run by a couple.

「I would like to stay a night……delicious smell. My stomach is grumbling now.」
「Yes, it's stimulating. You can expect big things from my husband's cooking. Actually, his cooking was the reason we started this inn.」

The smell wafting from the kitchen is making my stomach restless.

「It'll be 250 Dalas for a night's stay. It includes breakfast and dinner.」

Is she being honest? She seemed honest but that grin pours the cold water over.
I take the large copper coins out from my trousers, make the payment and take the keys to the room.

「Your room number is 205; it's on the second floor. Breakfast shall be available from 6 to 8

bells. As for dinner, it's likewise available from 6 bells till I put out the fire in the stove. If you're too late, you'll miss the meal, so be careful.」

Bells are used to tell the time in this town.
Electronic watches or likes don't exist in this world, so people seem to track the time through the ringing of the bell.

In the morning, from 6 to 12, the number of times the bell rings corresponds to the time. Similarly, in the afternoon, from 1 to 6.

When I was running around the town in relation to the quest, it suddenly started ringing. At that time, I was wondering what it was about.
By the way, 6 bells have already rung.

「Then I would like to eat right now.」
「Right now? Put your luggage……in the room. You don't seem to carry much luggage with you. Are you an adventurer? You're so young yet working so hard~.」

Just how (fucking) old did I use to look back on Earth?

As for the luggage, the sword hanging on my waist is about all the luggage I have. If I were to go eat with a sword, it might scare people. However, I've seen a lot of people in this area armed, so I guess they don't mind it.

「I became one just today; finished my first quest just now.」
「He, you must be really tired. Then I'll have my husband muster up more effort. Hey, honey.」

In reply, emerges a man from the kitchen. A bald, giant man.
My first impression of him was that of a skinhead, stern old-man. When he spoke, however, his tone was gentle. Is he perhaps aiming for gap moe?

「Ho, an adventurer? If you plan on staying in this town, please consider this inn. I'm dario; I run this inn. She's my wife, Flower.」
「Ah, yes. I'm Seiji.」

Inadvertently, I peep.

Name: Dario Fot
Race: Human
Age: 43
Job: Innkeeper
Skill(s)
Cooking Lv3 (145/150)

He's totally not cut out for this job!
Not just that. His Lv is about to go up, too.
Now this has made me anticipate dinner.

「Alright then, have a seat, please. Your meal will be ready in no time.」

Thereafter, he comes back with delicious, steamed vegetables and harmonious, thick milk stew with exquisite meat. The fragrance of black pepper seasoning is exciting my appetite. And the delicately baked, soft bread's taste is something that I have never tasted before.

Oh well, this much description of the meal is enough.
If Dario-san levels up to Lv4, what will he be called? Master chef?
I've decided to stay in this inn for a while.
I quench my thirst with fruit juice after the meal and bask in happiness.

I want to live it……once more.
I indulge in deep emotions.

Oh well, I have already died once.
Rather, I have reincarnated.

When I try to view the town through the window, it reflects my image. I look exactly the same.

It's strange, though. I heard that you remember nothing from your previous life after reincarnation.
Neither your family nor any attachment. Neither your affairs nor any regrets.
I knew it, I should have chosen my original world! At the very least, I wouldn't have to be worried about my family, don't you think?

It doesn't change the fact that I have reincarnated in this world. And I recognize that I have no other choice but to live in this world.
I don't intend to expose my life to danger. I have to seriously reconsider whether I should fight monsters or not. Unlike last time, there's a possibility that I won't be given a chance to reborn.

Originally, I should have reincarnated as a baby but I reincarnated in my original body. Based on this, I can be considered a heretic existence.

After greeting Flower-san, I go up to the second floor and enter my room.
I lean my sword against the wall, stretch my body and throw myself down on the bed with a plop.

What's there to say? So much happened; I'm tired now.
I want to sleep already.

How do I live in this world?……I can't decide at all.

——Reincarnating in another world is not that bad.

To the assault of somnolence, I surrender. My consciousness that I have been holding onto, I let go.

Thus, the curtain rings down on my first day in this otherworld.

1st Volume, 5th Chapter【Outside the Town】

I have changed a part of the description of Thief's Godly Skill.

Before change:
※(Total Lv of Your Combined Skills – Total Lv of the Opponent's Combined Skills) × 2% shall be added to the success rate.
After change:
※(Total Lv of Your Combined Skills – Lv of the Opponent's Skill to be Stolen) × 1% shall be added to the success rate. (No change in case of negative resultant number)

Wait, wait……Although we have come this far, there has been no appearance of the 'heroine' yet……Does that mean?

The progression of the story is rather slow.
Please read patiently. (Author's note)

In the previous world, I was able to experience the unspeakably pleasant feeling of going back to sleep once again after punching the alarm clock. Here, however, I can't reach the ringing bell, so I have no means of stopping it.

The ringing bell resounded in the town, denoting that it was 6 AM.
It rang 6 times.

I got up.
Oh, I feel refreshed. Is that because I went off to sleep early?

When I went downstairs to the first floor, Flower-san was already at the counter.
Was she awake ahead of the ringing of the bell?
Uhmazing……

「Good morning. Where do I wash my face?……」
「Ah, morning. If you exit from this door, you'll find a water well in the courtyard. It's used for laundry and such. There are no bathrooms in the rooms, so if you want hot water for bath, you can ask for it. It'll be for 10 Dalas only.」

Which reminds me, I didn't take bath yesterday.
But I'm not feeling dirty, so it's fine, right?

Although there are bathrooms in a high-class inn, Dario-san's cooking has already won my stomach.

I can't escape from Dario. (TN: Flowery background)

After splashing cold water, fetched from the water well, and completely regaining my consciousness, I headed back to the dining area.

As was, I decided to sit down and have breakfast.

The mellow fragrance of meat getting smoked and fat getting singed wafting from the kitchen made my stomach wide awake.
The freshly baked bread with a special sauce made of gravy and the mixed vegetables sandwich was a superb piece of work.
……My stomach, the old-man Dario-san made it full.

With such thoughts in my head, I returned to my room.

I equipped the sword, leaning against the wall, and pondered over today's plan.
If it were possible, I would stay at this inn today, too, but I don't have money.

I can't help but receive quests, if I am to earn money.
It'll be better to receive routine work quest but I would like to make use of the sword Jig-san gifted me.

Because it'll be dangerous when it gets dark, I can complete monster subjugation quest in the morning and receive routine work quest in the afternoon.
It's difficult, I know, but I won't be able to repay the loan if I don't do it.

「——Well then, I'll be off.」
「Aah, you're leaving? Then I'll keep the room reserved.」

Flower-san seems pleased that I complimented Dario-san's cooking for she will keep the room reserved, even though there's no surety that I will be able to earn money.
This made me motivated even more.

Although I arrived at the guild early in the morning, it was already bustling.
In this world, does everyone wake up early in the morning?
I can't stay up late here.

I was standing before the bulletin board, searching for rank E- quests.
However, there was no monster subjugation quest.

By the way, even though I'm rank E-, I can receive rank E and E+ quests.
Although the technical subclassification of the quests is done by the guild, they can't necessarily explain the difference in the degree of difficulty to a layman.
I can receive rank E- to E+ quests of my own discretion (after consulting with a staff member) if I believe that I can complete it.
It seems to be same in case of higher ranks such as D or C.

However, for the purpose of calculating completion count in relation to rank up, it'll count as one whether it's a rank E- quest or a rank E+ quest.

The degree of difficulty changes significantly from E to D, D to C and so forth.
For this reason, an examination is conducted at every stage.

Long story short, I can receive E and E+ quests, too.
There seemed to be a few here and there.

There's been an outbreak of Green Caterpillars in the forest south of Merville town. Exterminate 5 monsters.
Reward: 500 Dalas. 100 Dalas for each additional monster killed.
Client: Merville town garrison
Time limit: None
Subjugation proof part: Antenna

This quest was listed in the rank E section.
I just have to trample caterpillars, right?

I triumphantly took the quest paper to the reception desk.
Then I went to the familiar, Sheena-san.
There are other staff members, too, but……I-It's not like I went to her because she's hot.

「——Ah, Seiji-san. Good morning. You're going for a monster subjugation quest today? You should fight monsters gradually. To do it all of a sudden……」
「I think I can fare well against caterpillars.」
「You think? Well, you have a weapon and you seem to possess strength, too. Still……Isn't it sudden?」

Because I『possess strength』enough to step into the outskirts and I have to pay the compensation as early as I can in order to avoid persecution, I finished the procedure of receiving the quest and headed straight to the south forest.

En route, I purchased a leather sack and a pouch from a shop in the Commercial District.

I put the pouch, which would serve as my wallet, on my belt while the leather sack would be used to store the subjugation proof parts.
Thanks to that, I was completely broke.

I stopped by to greet because I found a familiar face of Nicholas-san at the south gate.

「Oh, Seiji, ain't 'ya? Where are you going?」
「I'm going to exterminate Green Caterpillars in the south forest.」
「Ah, there's has been an outbreak there. That aside, can you fight monsters?」
「Eh, it's just a caterpillar, no?」
「That's right, caterpillars. Although they're large in number, they're weak against weapons, so you'll be fine……Still, there are so many of them. Are you sure?」

……Guys, please don't raise flags for me!

I walked for about ten minutes.
After walking for a while, I could see a forest off the road.
That place matched the description I was provided with in the guild.

The weather was gentle. Are there four seasons in this world, too?
The forest was filled with fresh greenery. It felt subtly moist.
A grassy smell filled my lungs when I breathed. It felt soothing.
This thing is not Phytoncide, right? Because that thing stings!

I strolled through the forest.

「Pigiiii」

Something came out.

Un, how do I put it?……Because everyone raised flags for me, I had already prepared my heart for this.

What is this thing?!

It's about half my height.
Is this a caterpillar? How can it be so big?

While I was lost in my thoughts, it's green body started wriggling 'furu furu' as it jumped into the air.

The green caterpillar initiated a flying body attack……Surreal.

While checking its status to confirm whether it possessed skill or not, I found out that it was a Green Caterpillar, indeed.

《Abnormal Status Resistance Lv1 (2/10)》

There is, huh?
I did it! The discovery that monsters possess skills is a big one.

Which reminds me, I don't know exactly how many times per day I can invoke Thief's Godly Skill. (TN: Last time, he confirmed that it's at least 2)
Even if I tried to steal Abnormal Status Resistance, I wouldn't be able to for I haven't visually confirmed the skill.

Should I give up for now?

I back-stepped to dodge the flying body attack of the opponent.
Its movement is slow, at least, so I can deal with it.
From the intensity with which its body hit the ground, it didn't seem to be a heavy blow.

It jumped again——

For this, I don't need my sword. After confirming the trajectory of its flight, I launched a kick.

Bam!

By the time I felt the impact on my leg, the caterpillar's body had bent like '<'…… Furthermore, with its body bent acutely, the caterpillar was shot away and got nailed into the tree trunk.

Ah, ugly——Its body fluids splattered on the spot and sent me into nostalgia. (TN: Truck-kun)

Compared to childhood activities of making frogs explode or flooding the ant nests… it's a lot worse, don't you think?
Therefore……Un, this……is terrible……isn't it? Isn't it?

In fact, there was no feeling of it evading the attack.
Humanoid monsters might have some sort of resistance but it was an insect, after all.
This change of heart……is perhaps owing to the reincarnation.

Without wasting time, I collected the antenna growing on the splattered caterpillar's head.
I cleaved it with the help of my sword.

After getting over the tragedy unfurled in the forest, I finished hunting the required five.
It took me approximately an hour.
Although it was terrible of me to use it on the weakest of the monsters, this Physical Abilities Enhancement is a pretty amazing skill.

Like this, I can earn money more efficiently compared to routine work quests.

Let's try to go a little deeper——

As if I would.
I may encounter a strong monster there——Nope, never.

Something came out that didn't look like a caterpillar.
What is this thing?

Green body, the size of a child; considerably developed muscles on a contrastingly bony body; eerie, pointed ears; muddy, yellow eyes; curved, hooked nose; irregular, picket teeth; holding a short sword.

Raising its intimidating voice——What came out was a Small Goblin-chan.
I remember seeing the quest paper in the rank E section on the bulletin board. The subjugation proof part is its ear.

Although the order has reversed, there won't particularly be any problem in killing it before I receive the quest.
After I return to the guild, I'll officially receive the quest and turn in the subjugation proof parts immediately, on the spot.

However, because the opponent was a 'chan', I was being hesitant.

《Sword Arts Lv1 (4/10)》

There it is!
To steal~ or not to steal~.

Green Caterpillar was no match for me, so I'll do just fine against rank E+ opponent, too……I believe.

「Gyagiiii」

The speed of the opponent closing in while shrieking was, as expected, slow.
I pulled the sword out from the sheath and took a vigilant stance.
Even though it was slow, the short sword in its hand was legit.

The Small Goblin tried to stab me with its sword to kill me in one strike but I shifted my body and regained the distance.
Sword Arts has now been visually confirmed.

I forcefully kicked the ground and launched myself, closing the distance again. The opponent's face turned ugly as my speed colored shock on its face. I brandished my sword and attempted a diagonal slash but it was skillfully received.

Because I didn't possess Sword Arts, my sword attack was clumsy. On the other hand, the opponent possessed Sword Arts, making it an inevitable result.

I, however, have the advantage of overwhelming strength.
While our swords were locked, I found an opening and touched the opponent with my hand, sending it flying.
As for the success rate, it's 13%
It's still quite low.

However, my Luck stat seems to be high, so much so that I couldn't help but grin.

「——Your time……is up.」
「Gyagigui……Pya」

This time around, my sword handling was better, I think.
The Small Goblin's head, cut off, was rolling on the ground. It's eyes, void of life, were staring fixedly at the sky.

It's a mystical feeling.
How do I put it? It's like the way of naturally wielding a sword has seeped into my head.

Sword Arts Lv1……is delicious. Thanks for the delicacy!

Well then, what do I do now?
Because I have already completed my original quest, should I return?
But I want to confirm as to how many times Thief's Godly Skill can be used in a day.

For now, as it was the only opponent which I could steal skill from, I searched mainly for Small Goblins.
But I don't believe there's a meaning in stealing a skill which I already possess.

Thereafter, I searched the forest and fought several Small Goblins but every time, it resulted in failure.
Oh well.
It's just to confirm the usage limit.

Against the sixth one, I sensed that I succeeded in stealing.
Fun, so I can steal a skill that I already possess?

While thinking so, I checked my status.
What……is this?

《Sword Arts Lv1 (8/10)》

The number next to it.
Strange. It was (4/10) a moment ago.
The skill of the opponent I killed just now was (4/10)……

By any chance……Is it possible for the skill level to increase if I steal a skill which I already possess?
After all, it doubled all of a sudden.

Just now, the opponent was able to wield sword splendidly. I, on the other hand, couldn't have raised the skill level this much in one go by myself.

《Physical Abilities Enhancement Lv3 (4/150)》

Look, I have been using this skill for some time now yet it's totally unchanged.
To raise the skill level is extremely difficult, most likely.

If it really is possible, isn't it be great?……

After entertaining delusional ideas in my head for a while, I resumed the experiment.

Thenceforth, I didn't succeed in stealing skills but I confirmed that it can be used 10 times per day at Lv1.

Currently, the total level of my combined skills is 5
Considering 14% success rate, it will succeed only once or twice in a day.
If the opponent is Small Goblin, that is.

Woohoo!

Oh well. I decided to return to the town and take some rest.
I'm plenty tired.

～～♪

Hm~ hm~ I returned to Merville town in a cheerful mood.
It was still a little early for the sun to set.

「Oh! You came back alive. How did it go? Was it difficult?」
「No, not at all. It went great.」
「Fun, that's great. Were there too many caterpillars?」
「That's right. The harvest was big, too.」

Well, after subjugating these many, the reward will be big, too.
With a stroke of luck, I may even repay the loan right away.

With a blooming face, I went to the guild, to Sheena-san.

「——Seiji-san, thank you. There are a total of 10 antennae of Green Caterpillars.」
「Sheena-san」

「Actually, I killed Small Goblins, too, in the process and have collected their ears. If I bring quest paper from the bulletin board, will you be able to process it, too?」
「Eh? Did you kill them without receiving the quest first……?」

Huh? What's with this reaction? Is it no good?

「Ah, no, after the proof parts have been verified, you can receive the reward.」

O-Oh, what a relief~.

「Pardon me. Because Seiji-san said earlier that you can't fight monsters, I didn't explain it to you back then.」

Sheena-san shows me a quest paper.
This……is subjugation of Small Goblins quest paper. Huh? It's the same as the one on the bulletin board……

「Like Green Caterpillar's, there's no time limit for this quest either. Because many adventurers receive it——it has become a sort of continuous quest. Since many monsters have amassed in the forest, you can receive the quest after the subjugation proof parts have been verified and it will be deemed complete retrospectively.」

I……see?

「However, in case of strong monsters——the quests are not continuous. Therefore, before trying to fight them, make sure to receive the quest.」
「……Umm, why is that?」
「Unless the monster subjugated is same as the monster specified by the client, there's no meaning.」

I get it.
For example.
The subjugation target of the subjugation quest is a brutal monster A which attacks a certain village. The adventurer, however, kills a monster B of the same kind. Because the monster killed and the subjugation target, albeit same kind, are unrelated; the quest will not be deemed complete.

「I see. Because there's no meaning in looking for a monster different from the subjugation target, it's a situation which would be unlikely to arise if the quest was received beforehand.」
「Exactly. Therefore, other than continuous quests, make sure to receive the quest beforehand. Well then, I'll verify the ears of the Small Goblins. Please wait a moment.」

——In the end, both the antennae and the ears were 10 each.
10 Green Caterpillars amounted to 1,000 Dalas.
While the reward for 10 Small Goblins was 1,500 Dalas.
The objective of the subjugation quest was 5 monsters which means I completed each quest twice. As for the completion count, it was now 5.

The earnings this time were absolutely amazing.
I repaid the loan from the guild right away and kept the remainder amount.

「At any rate, I had no idea that Seiji-san was experienced in fighting monsters. To be able to accomplish it alone, your battle prowess should be equivalent to rank D, in my opinion.」
「Well, today was the first time I wielded a sword, though.」
「Fufu, please don't tease adults.」

How did I miss Onee-san's perfect smile? How regrettable!

「Ah, Seiji-san, if you are to engage in monster subjugation from now on, please don't forget to use the items trade counter there.」

She points to a place located in the corner of the first floor.
Eh~, so they sell items there. As for what items will be of use to me, I'll have to ask.

「Well, Seiji-san seems to be a good adventurer.」
「Wawa, can I be an advanced swordsman in ten days?」
「I look forward to it.」

——Feeling pity, Sheena-san unintentionally let out a smile, even though I was serious.

Riot Grasper Chapter 6

1st Volume, 6th Chapter【Playing with the Caterpillars】

When I calculated as to how much it would be after stealing at this pace for 10 days, I realized just how terrible the growth rate of our protagonist is. (Author's note)

At last, now that I had surplus earnings, I headed to Feeder Pops' and paid for two days' stay.
I know that I was wrong to have had her keep the room reserved. From now on, I'll check out duly.
I should pay on day-to-day basis.

「Please enjoy your stay……Ah~ ah~ it has gotten so dirty. Why haven't you washed it yet? This sword……Won't it get rusted and snap if you don't do the maintenance?」

After seeing the Small Goblins' (let's call it Smagob from now on) blood on my clothes and the sword, Flower-san advised me.
Which reminds me, I don't have a change of clothes.
If I washed my only clothes, I would be stark naked.

As for how to do the maintenance of the sword, Flower-san taught me some basics. For adventurers stay at this inn, she seems to have learnt the basics.

——From the shops in the Commercial District, I bought some necessary items.
A set of clothing, two sheets of towel, one bottle of oil and a leather flask.
With this, I almost became broke again.

Even though I wanted to return at around noon, it was 5 PM already for I was immersed in hunting Smagobs.

When I quenched my thirst at the water well, I realized how foolish it was to go on an adventure without water and food.

I returned to the inn and decided to do the laundry and the maintenance of the sword by dinner.
I put the sword in a bucket of water in order to wash the clots of blood away. I took it out and wiped the water off with a dry sheet of towel. I soaked the other sheet of towel, which I bought from the shop, in a little oil and then polished the sword with it.

Is this enough? Flower-san is not a professional, after all.
For genuine, full-fledged maintenance, I'll take it to Jig-san.

By the time I finished the maintenance, 6 bells had already rung.
After spending blissful time in the dining area, I paid a nominal 10 Dalas to have hot water prepared for my sweaty body, as you would expect, was feeling uncomfortable.

After carrying the pail and a cloth to the room, and wiping my body, I got to relish a bit of the refreshing experience again.
I knew it! I want to take a proper bath, after all……
Flower-san said that high-class inns have bathrooms. Is it possible to rent just the bathroom?
I'll do something about it sometime soon.

「Fuwaa~~~」

I subconsciously let out a loud yawn.
Well then, should I go to sleep after returning the pail?

During the night————I recalled the atrociously murdered figure of the monster.
What the fuck? I want to dream of getting seconds of Dario-san's cooking.

Next day——Fifth month, first week, the day of the Earth. Clear weather.

I got up in Feeder Pops' at 6 AM.
After feasting on the breakfast, I stopped by the guild to pay a visit to the items shop.

Because I was planning on trying it, I asked.

「Do you sell poison?」

O-Oh, did I sound suspicious?

「N-No, wait. I'm an adventurer. I want poison that's effective on monsters.」
「……Aah, please wait a minute.」

The shop clerk went inside after easing his expression and stayed inside for a while.
He came back with a small bottle in his hand. The contents of the bottle: nasty, dark purple.

The poison!

It is, isn't it? I know.

「It's the only one we have available. There'll be no problem in selling it to you.」

I'm trusted? Don't make me blush.

「However, don't use it except for hunting or on monsters. Oh well, you won't abuse the guild registration, will you? If you tried to abuse……In the past, there was a guy who brought disgrace to the guild. All around the world——Oh, let's not stray away from the topic.」

Please continue! I wanna hear! The Adventurer's guild is scary.

「Its price is 5,000 Dalas.」

……What?

「Why is it so expensive?」
「Why? Because it's extracted from a large quantity of poisonous herbs. The materials are costly and the process takes a long time.」

Which reminds me, I'm broke.

「I'm sorry. I'll buy it……some other time.」

It's no use. If I bought small quantity, it would adversely affect the cost performance.
Is there no other way of buying it?

Tottering, I entered the guild and picked up the Smagob and the Caterpillar quest papers.

「Good morning, Sheena-san.」
「Seiji-san, what happened? You seem unwell.」
「Nothing. By the way……Why do you need to subjugate such a large number of Smagobs and caterpillars?」

It's a continuous quest, after all.

「Smagobs……Aah, Small Goblins are highly fertile. If they were left unchecked, they would grow and form colonies. If they weren't regularly subjugated, they would damage the vicinity of the town and the villages.」

Fumu fumu.

「As for Green Caterpillars, they are also found in abundance. If they were left to propagate any further, there's a concern that they would damage the forest.」
「Damage the forest?」
「Yes, it has exceedingly large appetite. It eats all the plants which kills the bountiful forest. It is said that it can even eat poisonous herbs.」

……!?

「Poisonous herbs?」
「Eh, yes. Such as Neville grass which contains weak toxin. Green Caterpillar seems to be resistant to poison.」
「About this Neville grass, can you please tell me in detail?」

Sheena-san took out a picture book from under the counter.
It was a several cm thick book. If you were hit with it, you could even die.

「This book is used as a reference by the adventurers who receive collection quests…… Neville grass……Here it is.」

The sketch shown to me depicted a grass the leaf of which was strangely curled. This was its only notable feature.

「Although there's no Neville grass collection quest at the moment, there may be a quest later on.」

I see. Only if there's demand, will there be supply. No one will pay for something which they don't need.
Just you wait, caterpillar-chan.
Wait~ while I prepare your feed~.
A creepy smile surfaces on my face.

「……What's the matter?」
「N-No, nothing, nothing at all.」

After receiving the Smagob and the Caterpillar subjugation quests and completing my preparations, I left for the south forest.

First target for today is Green Caterpillar.
According to the book, Neville grass grows in the south forest, so I started off with it.

I started collecting herbs in the forest.
I came across a few caterpillars but I hid myself and let them go past, giving priority to collecting the herbs.

《Neville Grass》——Both its leaves and roots contain weak poison. Ingesting it in large quantity is lethal.

I wonder if this much will be enough.

I collected 10, same as the number of times I can use the skill.
After walking for a bit, I confirmed the prey.
Its body looks just like a potato. So cute.

「Pigyuppigiii」

It noticed me and tried to close in but I immediately threw Neville grass in front of it.
The caterpillar stopped and started eating it without any care.

「Pigyu?」
「He~re, go on and eat. Is it delicious? Do you want more?」

It looked at me warily but then shifted its focus back to the food and started grazing Neville grass.

「Well, well. Was it delicious? It's amazing, though. Can you really eat poisonous herbs without any problem? Alright then——」

What happened thereafter, I'll leave it out. If I described it in detail, I would turn into a bad guy.
Animal rights……No, insect rights organizations would get mad if I did.

Neville grass was all used up.

Because there was still some time left, I decided to hunt five Smagobs, too, before returning.
I wiped the (caterpillars') body fluids off my clothes with the help of tree leaves and headed deeper into the forest.
Alongside hunting, I will try to raise the skill level of Sword Arts, too.

Name: Seiji・Agatsuma
Race: Human
Age: 18
Job: Adventurer (Rank E-)
Unique: Scholar's Knowledge
Skill(s)
・Thief's Godly Skill (Riot Grasper) Lv1 (5/10)
・Physical Abilities Enhancement Lv3 (4/150)
・Sword Arts Lv1 (8/10)
・Abnormal Status Resistance Lv1 (4/10)

Riot Grasper Chapter 7

1st Volume, 7th Chapter【The Beastkin Parent and Child】

In just one week, he has become considerably strong.
Can our protagonist pass the promotion exam? (Author's note)

——One week has passed since I first baited the caterpillars.
Fifth month, second week, the day of the Earth. Overcast weather.

In the familiar room # 205 of Feeder Pops', I rolled out of the bed after having gotten my eardrums shaken by the sound of 6 bells. (TN: "Big Fat Daddy's" changed to "Feeder Pops'")

「Now then——Today is the exam day, huh?」

Before the exam, I checked my status to have a look at the result of the training (stealing) this past one week.

Name: Seiji・Agatsuma
Race: Human
Age: 18
Job: Adventurer (Rank E+)
Unique: Scholar's Knowledge
Skill(s)
・Thief's Godly Skill (Riot Grasper) Lv2 (5/50)
・Physical Abilities Enhancement Lv3 (5/150) (TN: Physical Enhancement has been changed to Physical Abilities Enhancement)
・Sword Arts Lv2 (25/50)
・Abnormal Status Resistance Lv2 (1/50)

I think I worked hard.
Four days ago, Rio……Thief's Godly Skill reached Lv2 which increased the efficiency.
The reason being, the base success rate jumped up to 20%.

However, I expected that the daily usage limit would go up……but it was not the case.
I just wanted to say it.

It was totally against my expectation.
In other words, it decreased.

When I was trying to engage in a battle for the sake of confirmation, a Smagob (same ol'?) appeared in front of my eyes, asking questions. (※Smabog can't speak; it was an image) (TN: Image was used by the author. Imagination would be more appropriate)

I shut myself in the inn and healed myself with Dario-san's cooking. I passed the entire day living leisurely life.

The daily usage limit of Thief's Godly Skill depends on the skill Lv. Shouldn't it increase then?

But no~.
'Depends on the skill Lv' means『decrease』.
sigh

……It's not funny!

Currently, the total success rate is 28% (vs. Smagob).
The daily usage limit decreased but……

At Lv1——(0.17×10=1.70)
At Lv2——(0.28×8=2.24)
At Lv3——(0.39×6=2.34)
At Lv4——(0.50×4=2.00)
At Lv5——(0.61×2=1.22)

I'm not sure if the daily usage limit decreases by 2 every time. The number of successful steals didn't change much on the first day. If I'm unlucky, it won't succeed even once. I need tens to hundreds of tries before coming to a conclusion.

It's the lowest in case of Lv5. I wonder whether reaching Lv5 is a privilege or not. Seriously.

Now then, if the number of successful steals doesn't increase even after leveling up, wasn't it justified for me to cry?
——Yeah, I did have such a time.

There is a big difference between stealing《success rate》, which also includes failed attempts, and《the number of successful steals》.

The base success rate did increase, however.
Furthermore, the total success rate will further increase with the increase in the Lv of other skills.

What it implies is——I will only play with small fries. I have decided.

With the low success rate, it's better to go for opponents that are commonly available. The reason being, there is condition that bars stealing the same skill from the same opponent after having failed once.

When the success rate increases, stealing skills from powerful opponents that are rare will be relatively more efficient.
Besides, if I fail at stealing a rare skill from a one-of-a-kind existence, it will disappear.

In a sense, it's logical.

After the daily usage limited decreased, I was made to recognize it more conspicuously.

Unless the success rate is high, it is better to use Rio……t Grasper on Smagob rather than wasting precious《Sword Arts Lv3 (100/150) of a Dragonlord Warrior》.

By the way, it's just a hypothetical existence. I don't know if such a creature as Dragonlord Warrior exists.

Why did I have to choose dragon, though?……
Even I feel embarrassed.

Oh well, it's a natural thought pattern of a battle junky.
'Pursuing strength is not happiness'……How many times have I heard it in movies?

I want to be the ultimate, the supreme, the strongest existence in the world!
……Just kidding.

However, I want to rank up in the Adventurer's guild to establish my status in the society.
And to do that, I need strength.

「——Whatever, even if I ignore things such as the daily usage limit, my growth rate is still pretty crazy.」

Take Jig-san for example. He's a dwarf who has been smithing for all his life yet he's only Lv4. I, on the other hand, didn't even know how to swing a sword. In just one week, however, I have reached Lv2.
If someone else were to know, they wouldn't be able to help but shout 'fuck'.

By the way, the skill effect improves drastically when its Lv increases.
When the skill points increase, the effect improves slightly. However, when Sword Arts Lv increased from 1 to 2, I could feel a great change.

Yes, change.

That's not what I wanted to say.
It felt same as when I acquired Sword Arts for the first time.

In every way, it's different from learning the skill by training one's body and polishing sword technique.
It felt like a strange elation permeating my body.

——Transmitting from the ground to the legs; surging to the waist; rising along the median line, reaching the shoulders——Finally, culminating in the arms.

It would perhaps not manifest to such a degree if I didn't possess physical abilities to a certain extent.

I was a little confused at the time of Lv up but there was no problem with the movement thanks to Physical Abilities Enhancement. I can now vouch that it complements martial arts.

If Sword Arts ever reached Lv5, wouldn't it be overspec? At that point, there would be nothing impossible with a sword but at the same time, it would be impossible for the skill to level up anymore.
I better level up Physical Abilities Enhancement simultaneously.

Although my body feels more toned than before, compared to muscular adventurers……it pales.
It's dispiriting.

What if I fight an opponent who has same skill Lv as me? Victory and defeat will be decided by the difference in physical abilities, right?
In that case……I will be at disadvantage.

By the way, I heard about Lv up from Sheena-san. The adventurers seem to call this phenomenon 'breaking through the barrier'.
The reason being, Lv isn't normally recognizable.
According to her, the battle strength of someone who has broken through the barrier is considerably higher than someone who hasn't.

——Now then, this much monologue is enough.

Having become rank E+, I completed the number of quests required for the next rank up yesterday.
The rank up exam is conducted collectively. A date is fixed after coordinating with all the adventurers taking the exam. I'm screwed.

It's today.

「Today, I'll finally rank up to D-, huh?」

If you looked at the people who would be taking the examination……their builds are not in any way inferior to Bal and Zac.
There's a huge difference in their physique and mine but I have Physical Abilities Enhancement.
……If you looked at them, you might think they're rank C or B.

Moreover, I visited Jig-san's shop, as per the promise, and had him make a new equipment for me as I earned enough money this past one week.
As for the Baselard, I whetted it yesterday.

《Soft Leather Armor》——Leather armor forged from tanned leather. Defensive power varies greatly depending on the material used. ※Gigvorg leather

As to why I bought this, I'm ashamed of saying it.
It's best left unsaid.

It seemed to be made of some sort of wolf skin.

Although it was the armor of the lowest rank at Jig-san's shop, it costed one gold coin——10,000 Dalas, that is.
Still, it's not something which a commer can afford to wear.
From just a look, you can see it's an expert-class blacksmith's work……Hmm? Isn't tanning of leather unrelated to smithing?

Whatever. I don't care.

「Now then……I should get going.」

When I completed my preparation and went downstairs to the dining area, it was filled with an appetising aroma.
After I had Dario-san's cooking, which I have become addicted to, I left for the guild.

Unfortunately, Dario-san has yet to reach Lv4.
His skill points are still at (145/150).
Is that normal for it to be this difficult?……
Isn't there an easy way?

「——Good morning.」
「Ah, Seiji-san. Good morning.」

Sheena-san's smile was as brilliant as ever.

Lately, because I have been using Smagobs to level up my skill, I'm now also known as Smagob Hunter.

Smagobs 24 hours a day!
Morning, Smagobs!
Afternoon, Smagobs!
Evening, too, Smagobs!

Smagobs! Smagobs! Smagobs!

I don't remember as to how many ears I have presented to Sheena-san by now.
It wouldn't be strange if she hated me.

Because she has professional attitude, however, she remains composed.

By the way, I'm being reserved with the caterpillars after Abnormal Status Resistance reached Lv2. There has been no opportunity yet to test its effect.
I can drink poison or take a paralysis pill but there's no reason for me to do that willingly.

《Abnormal Status Resistance》——Increases resistance to all types of abnormal status.

Now that it's Lv2, I shouldn't fall into abnormal state that easily. That's a relief. At Lv5, will I be completely immune to abnormal state?
If I ever reached that level, I might muster some courage to pick a bottle of poison off the

shelf and chug it down.

「Today is the exam for promotion to rank D. I'll pray for your success.」
「Thank you very much. Err……Where should I wait?」
「That's right. Wait there until 7 bells sound.」

She pointed to the tables and the stools in the rest space on the first floor. (TN: Space was used by the author. Area would be more appropriate)
…Wawa, some of the tables were brand new.

There were three adventurers, seemingly men, already there.
They looked a little tense. They seemed to be waiting for the exam just like me.

Disapproved.

…….Un. One of them had no skill; another one had《Gardening Lv1》; the last one had《Fire Magic Lv1》.
One of them seems to be well-endowed. The other two better look for another job.
Oh well, that they are rank E+ adventurers, I guess they are able to fight.

Fire Magic is good, no? But it's only Lv1.

I searched the the guild like a peeping tom and found a few adventurers with magic skills.
Honestly, I'm envious.
I want it.
If I used it in conjunction with Sword Arts, wouldn't I be able to use《Flame Slash!》?

……Isn't there a retired mage somewhere with one foot in grave?
Or a monster……capable of using magic?

When I was entertaining my delusions, I noticed two people coming here.
Are these people examinees, too?

I occasionally saw their kind in the town and the guild——Beastkin, that is.

Beast-like face, brimming with wild look; pin-ears atop head; a scar on the side; a stereotypical warrior……A beastkin old-man.

Name: Arnold・Fan
Race: Beastkin (Wolf)
Age: 38
Job: Adventurer (Rank E+)
Skill(s)
・Body Arts Lv2 (40/50) (TN: Changed Body Techniques back to Body Arts for consistency)
・Sword Arts Lv2 (20/50)
・Howling Moon Lv2 (14/50)
・Stick Arts Lv1 (5/10) (TN: Cane Arts has been changed to Stick Arts)

Oh, he's versatile.
Wha……t? His rank isn't different from other people.

Indeed……those who are strong try to be adventurers. Those who switch from different jobs to become adventurers, will start off as new adventurers and will take the exam for promotion to rank D. It must be the same case……huh?

The same case as me.

《Howling moon》——Exclusive to Beastkin (Wolf). Increases spirit and physical abilities under the moonlight.

My heart is bleeding. Is there really such a thing?
Although I'm interested……I won't be able to use it even if I steal it.
Also, I can't plunder others on a whim.

There's another person……The only female.

Name: Lim・Fan
Race: Beastkin (Cat)
Age: 16
Job: Adventurer (Rank E+)
Skill(s)
・Body Arts Lv2 (16/50)
・Cooking Lv1 (7/10)
・Magic Power Conversion Lv1 (5/10)
・Berserkification Lv1 (3/10)

A cat beastkin?
Fluffy ears and tail look so good.

Dark brown, shoulder-length hair; golden eyes. A personification of cat, indeed.
Because beastkin in this world look close to humans, they seem easy to get along with.
Their surname……is Fan……?
Are they by any chance……parent and child?
They don't look alike at all.

《Magic power conversion》——Converts mana into physical attack power.
《Berserkification》——Can acquire the skill a posteriori. The invocation condition may vary depending on the circumstances of acquisition.

Un, quite a quirky skill.
Mana……? Is it same as magic power?
I thought skills were innate but it doesn't seem to be the case. (TN: Innate or a priori, opposite of a posteriori)
I hope the exam finishes uneventfully.

If I acquired a skill called《First-class Flag Raiser》, I wouldn't be surprised.

Riot Grasper Chapter 8

1st Volume, 8th Chapter【The Primary Exam】

In the 7th chapter, I have revised a part about the bodily sensation of Sword Arts Lv up.
Those who read the 7th chapter immediately after it was posted, please give it a skim if you feel like it.

Examiner-san seems to be a good character. (Author's note)

——So it appears that the six people gathered here are going to take the promotion exam.

「Well then……」

——'I'll have you guys kill each other.'
That was the development came to my mind but it didn't seem to be the case.

「So you six are the examinees of rank D promotion exam, huh? I'm a staff member of the Merville chapter of the guild; call me Bays. I'll be the examiner this time.」

After 7 bells rang, a man with gentle demeanor came over and greeted everyone.
He was wearing glasses; a bespectacled gentleman.

「It may be rude of me to say this but I want you all to understand one thing. Once you're rank D, the difficulty of monster subjugation quests will increase considerably. As a rank E, you'll have the opportunity to fight weak monsters. Before making your decision, please consider the increased risk associated with rank D quests.」

Like I thought, the state of my mind has changed after reincarnation.
That I'm not avoiding this even after getting up close with such a creature as Smagob is a clear evidence.
If someone told the previous me to fight an enemy, albeit short, holding a knife; I would be like 'holy shit!'.

That said, I have to think calmly whether I want to expose myself to danger or not.

I get the meaning underlying Bays-san's words.
To live in this world——especially as an adventurer, you have to be prepared.
I'll have to warn myself not to steal skills frivolously.

Bays-san, the expression of whom had turned slightly rigid, regained his originally gentle demeanor.

「Oh well, enough of the big words. It's a custom for those who are halfway there to impart these words to the adventurers who are trying to break through the first barrier. These same words were imparted to me, too, back in the days.」

I see. They, of course, won't say something to discourage the adventurers from taking the

exam. It's to make them more focused.
N……So these words were said to Bays-san, too. huh?

「I was an adventurer, too. Back then, I was rank B. I still train, though. It's common for an adventurer to switch their jobs to a staff member of the Adventurer's Guild, like me. It's also common for them to be entrusted the tasks of an examiner, like me.」

If a quest is near expiry and no one is accepting it, do they take it over?

According to Sheena-san, the purpose of the exam is to assess the ability.
So the examiner, naturally, has to be someone who's able.

「For a high rank promotion exam, we request an expert adventurer to be the examiner. For this reason, the content of the exam is different every time. This time, however, it's a rank D promotion exam, so.」

As for Bays-san's skill……Spear Arts Lv2 (45/50), huh?
The level of his skill is high.

「Now then, without further ado, I'll explain the details of the exam.」

While saying so, Bays-san fixed his glasses. He looked so cool.
It's so frustrating.
He wasn't lying when he said that he still trains. I was able to catch a glimpse of his muscles from the gap in his armor.

「The promotion exam comprises a primary exam……and a secondary exam.」

It reminded me of the university entrance exam. My stomach hurts!

「The primary exam won't take long. You'll just have to contest with me.」

Right at this moment……Next to me, one of the three people who arrived before me…… Gardening-san asked a question.

「Err, you're a former rank B adventurer. To contest with you……」
「It's alright. You don't have to defeat me to pass the exam. I'll only ascertain whether you have the ability to take up rank D quests or not……Of course, if you win, you pass. Let me tell you one thing, however, that it won't be easy for I hate to lose.」

Upon hearing this, Gardening-san heaved a sigh of relief. So did No-skill-san and Fire-magic-san.
The two beastkin silently nodded.

「Well then, everyone, please follow me. We'll be conducting the primary exam there.」

Having said that, Bays-san started walking towards the door in the inner part of the guild's first floor.

Which reminds me, I having been curious for some time now. What's behind the door?
However, at this moment, I got the answer……

I was right.
From the outside, the guild building looked quite big.

Behind the door was an expansive training area.
How do I say, it smelled sweaty, just like the dressing room of an athletics club.
It was splendid nevertheless.

It was a square room with each side measuring 30m.
There was enough room to move around.
On the walls, there were wooden cases with weapons inside.

「I'll have everyone use a training weapon for the primary exam. Because its blade is breakable, there's no risk of injury. By the way, I'll be using a spear. Well then, everyone, pick a weapon of your choice.」

And I went so far as to specially whet Baselard.
……It's dispiriting.

Indeed, if you were to use a sharp sword against a human, you would hold back.
I have no intention of ceasing to be a human.
Even thinking about it makes my body tremble.

「Now then……Right. Let's make the order of the exam same as the order which you arrived at the guild in? If the first examinee is ready, please step forward.」

When I arrived, three people were already there.
Those three looked at each other and one of them stepped forward.

「O-Okay then, I'll be the first.」

It was Gardening-san.
As for his weapon, it was a sword. You could see that he was tensed.

「Very well. Ready……Start.」

Bays-san's warm smile receded like a wave from a beach.
The eyes that could be seen from behind the glasses were completely unbefitting a person who was speaking so gently just a moment ago.
The temperature seemed to have gone down, too.

He's a scary person.

Dwarfed under the overwhelming pressure, Gardening-san couldn't take a single step forward.

「What happened? If you're not gonna come……then——」
「U-Uooo!」

He darted off.
Holding the sword high, he closed in on Bays-san.
Even if you don't have the relevant skill, you can handle a weapon.
His movement wasn't particularly bad.

However——

At that moment, a shrill sound cut through the air.
Other than the two competing, there was no one making any sound. Therefore, the sound of their actions was reverberating inside the room.

The sword of Gardening-san flicked off the shaft of Bays-san's spear.
Suppressing the recoil by shifting his weight, thus, lowering his centre of gravity; he approached the other side mercilessly.

Gardening-san recevied the shaft directly on his shoulder and rolled onto the floor.

「……U……Gwu」
「Unfortunately, you have failed. Although there's a difference between our abilities and weapons, it doesn't mean that I can't assess your ability.」

He didn't go easy. At all.
Nah, you could say that he went easy for he only used the shaft to attack.

「You may not be satisfied with the assessment but the guild can't entrust a quest to someone who doesn't have the requisite level of ability. I hope you understand.」

That was harsh.

「The guild promotes an adventurer meticulously. If the adventurer has the level of ability required for the quest, there's less risk of the adventurer losing their life. Therefore……Please try again after you have gained adequate level of ability.」

Bays-san's face regained the gentle smile.

He's so charming~~
……The carrot and stick policy, huh? It's ingenious. It's terrible.

——The next examinee was No-skill-san.
As for the weapon in his hands, it was a spear.
Bays-san's spear——which measured about 180cm——was a bit short.
The one in No-skill-san's hands was a long spear.

Range is extremely crucial.
The main advantage of a spear is its overwhelming reach.

After witnessing Gardening-san's contest, he must have realized that it was foolish to challenge a spear with a sword.
In terms of range, No-skill-san's long spear had the advantage.

When I reincarnated in this world, I was given just one skill in the name of 'special service'.
At that time, I was shocked but now, it's proving to be of immense help.

No-skill-san, all the b——

The moment the contest started, No-skill-san lunged. His spear, however, hit but the air.
After dodging with ease, Bays-san struck the chest of the opponent before he could pull his long spear back.
Another blow was delivered to the flank of a gap-ridden No-skill-san who collapsed on the floor.

「……Unfortunately.」

Bays-san shook his head. That lash was a bit overboard.
All the b——est, No-skill-san.

……I seem to have underestimated the exam.
Oh well, I can't use anything other than sword anyway.

The next one was……Fire-magic-san.
Because he can use magic, he can keep a distance from Bays-san——

No! You've gotta be kidding me!
Fire-magic-san's weapon was——an axe!
……What of magic?

Aah, is that the case……perhaps?
The Lv of his Fire Magic was 1 but the skill points were (0/10).

For he was given the option to choose a weapon, the weapon he chose must be the one he trained in. To begin with, mages are rare. So even if he possessed Fire Magic, he probably didn't notice it. Is that the case?

What a waste.
Pearls cast before a swine will only get trampled.

Oh well, the result now would be clearer than it would have been with Fire Magic.
Thank you for the show.

——Finally, it was my turn.
I wanted to touch the body of Fire-magic-san, who had his head drooped on the floor, but I couldn't visually confirm Fire Magic.
If he doesn't wanna use it……I can use it.
However, he was still young, about same age as me. Therefore, he had future……

「……You might wanna reconsider as to what fighting style suits you best.」

I might have sounded full-of-air but it was the only advice I could give him.

「Now then, the next one……seems quite young.」

Everyone……says the exact same thing.

「I'm 1……「——8 years old, right? I have already checked the registered information of everyone who's taking the exam.」

Did he say that on purpose!? Also, he's pretty close……In that case.
If it's this guy, I'll not feel guilty.

「I have heard from Sheena, my colleague, about you. That you're quite promising……And.」

Huh? Somehow, that felt good.

「It's not gonna be easy. Please show me everything you're capable of.」

He pointed the short spear at me.
The weapon I chose was a long sword. It was longer than Baselard, the weapon I always use.
It measured about 80cm.
It was somewhat flexible. Its coverage was more than Baselard's.
I had already practice-swung it for a while in order for my hands to get accustomed to it.

「Well then, shall we start?……」

Bays-san retracted the smile off his face. He has done it dunno how many times already.
This guy, I knew it——

No worries.
I'll show him!

——My……total experience!

That was embarrassing. I'll never say it again.

1st Volume, 9th Chapter【The Spear Master, Bays】

It's a scheduled post.
First place in the daily interest ranking has been taken (stolen) but I have no regrets.
I received many comments in regards to the need of a 'heroine'.
After thinking over various options, I have finally decided on one.

Youna Oudou, an old Weekly Shounen Jump series, is the author's favorite. (Author's note)
(TN: Never heard of such a series)

——Now then, how do I attack?
To be honest, I'm tensed for it's my first PvP battle.
I'm glad, though, that it's a mock battle.
As for injury……Although it's a practice weapon, the other side possesses highly skilled martial arts.
There's no use mulling over it.

I must strike first——with all my power.

After letting out a short breath, I bounded off and closed in.
To counter any line of attack, I was holding the sword waist-high. In one bound, I covered more than 5m.

It was the other side, however, who took the initiative.
Carrying the two-handed short spear in one hand, he lashed at me without any hesitation.
From the front, the short spear, the speed of which was fast to begin with, looked long just as well.
……How could its reach be this long?

The attack was more pointed than lined.
Because it was difficult to trace the trajectory of the attack, it was difficult to dodge it.
……However, it's all good. I can dodge it.

I shifted half my body, reducing the body surface area, letting Bays-san's attack pass by my side.
An air-tearing sound brushed my ear. Disregarding it, I slip into his bosom.

The other side was slightly surprised at my evasive maneuver. However, immediately after, he regained his calm. With a flick of his wrist, his spear rotated. In but a moment, the butt-end of his spear came stabbing.

「Uoa!」

I avoided it by diverting its trajectory with the help of my sword.
After coming under attack twice, I was thinking of gaining some distance……No, I must not

retreat.
Once more——Break!

「Ooo!」

I pushed my body once more, putting all my power into the fist which was grasping the sword.
I adopted a low posture, with the lower-half of my body rotated like a spring, adding more strength to the attack.

The strike, which contained all my power, aiming for the back of his shoulder, was received by him through the shaft of his spear.

A dull metallic sound clanged.
Before I knew it, both of his hands were now on the short spear, making it considerably difficult for me to penetrate.
He was attacking with one hand and defending with two. It was troublesome.

The short spear, held in both his hands, scythed down but I dodged it.
Furthermore, he slanted and swang it down, mowing at my feet but I jumped, dodging it.

While I was airborne, I slashed my blade down from above——

——Even that was neutralised by the short spear.

Negating power with power.
gichigichi When the sword and the short spear clashed, I uttered a roaring cry.

My only option is pure power.
However, it was easier said than done for I was wielding a long sword in one hand while the other side was holding the short spear in both hands.

I always use my left hand for plundering. However, if I did it now, it would leave a bad aftertaste.
In times like these do I feel the need of something that I could proudly use.
I wish I had magic but I don't.

To break the deadlock, I slid the sword from the top of the short spear's shaft, aiming for the opponent's fingers.
Having noticed it, Bays-san let his hand on the spear's shaft go and parried the attack. Using the only hand, placed firmly on the butt-end, he stabbed at my body.

Due to my posture, I wasn't able to completely evade the attack. However, I mitigated the impact by jumping backward.

It still hurt.
Although it hit the armor, it hurt.

Bays-san might be superior in terms of martial arts but I held the advantage in terms of physical abilities. It might be the game changer.

——It wasn't over yet.

We had two-three more exchanges.
I had no idea that fighting a strong opponent would be so nerve-racking.

Nevertheless, one of my attacks penetrated his defense. Although it was shallow, it hit his shoulder.
We were now even.
……I'm probably a character who hates to lose.

「——That's it for now.」

Thereafter, Bays-san withdrew his short spear.

「It was inappropriate of me to say that you'll pass the exam if you defeat me; I apologize. Seiji-san, you pass the primary exam with the perfect score. It's unfortunate that we can't finish this contest for there still are some examinees left.」
「Ha……Haa……Fuu……Got it.」

I was still feverish inside.
Clouded with excitement, I might look like a war-monger.

My right arm, I couldn't control my right arm.
Fuu……Somehow, it settled down.

Loosing the grip on the hilt, I reclined the sword against the wall.
It's so tiring~.

「To have such a sword technique at such a young age……I wonder how you train.」

The one talking to me was the scary, beast-faced Arnold-san.
Having been admired, I was embarrassed. However, I did work hard at training (stealing), so I nodded in acknowledgement.

「Thank you very much. You are?……」
「I'm Arnold. She's my daughter, Lim.」
「I'm Seiji. You two are beastkin?」
「Aah. Lim, where are your manners?」

Having been urged by Arnold-san, the daughter, Lim, called out, peeking from behind her father.
Did I do something?

「……I'm- Lim.」

She whispered. I expected her to continue but she didn't.

「——Next, please.」
「Fumu……Lim, you go ahead.」

After nodding silently, Lim proceeded toward Bays-san.
She didn't have any weapon. From forearms till upper-arms, her arms were covered with…… leather gloves.
The armor was minimal in order not to impede movement.
That she has Body Arts skill……and high Lv at that——is her fighting style barehanded (fist)?

Catching her figure from the corner of my eye, I resumed my conversation with Arnold-san.

「I'm sorry. She doesn't talk to anyone beside me. Although it was rude of her, I hope you didn't mind.」
「N-Not at all, I didn't mind……Did something happen?」

When the contest between Bays-san and Lim started, the two could be seen moving.
I see. So the gloves act like a guard.
The short spear slid on top of the gloves, reaching her chest——and.

「It's not an interesting story……However, if you're still interested, would you please be concerned about Lim?」
「Wouldn't that be personal?……」

Isn't it bad to pry into the matters of the people you just met?

「No, I'm not asking you to go that far. Just 'hi' and 'hello', when you two meet in the guild and in the town, would do. I wonder if Lim will start to cheer up if she talks to someone her age.」

To be exact, there's a difference of two years but I'm sure it doesn't matter to Arnold-san.

「What if I'm a bad guy? Won't you be putting your daughter in danger?……」

I tried my utmost to put up a bad-guy face.
Is it really alright for him to tell the circumstances of her daughter to a stranger?

「Kuhahaha! Well, no bad guy would say that they are bad. Also……from your eyes, I can tell that you're a reliable person. You can call it intuition.」

I ended up getting laughed at.
I get it. This man is authentic beast.
Being a human, I don't think I could do that.

「Oh well, it's not an uncommon story. To the east of Merville town, there's a mountain range called Rave.」

I have been around for some time now, so I have gotten a hang of the geography.
Merville is a commercial town which falls inside the territory of Lechelle kingdom. Neighboring Lechelle kingdom in the east is Sven empire. Covering the border between the two is Rave mountain range.
The checkpoint is situated at the rift between the mountains where the elevation is low.

「Lim and I used to live in a beastkin village in the south across the border. One day……the village was attacked by the demons. The best I could do was to take Lim with me and escape.」

According to him, it's not uncommon……Don't scare me.
So demons do exist.
'Possess superior abilities but in hostile relationship with other races', was it?
Considering how strong Arnold-san is, how strong would the demons be?

「Sven empire tends to persecute demi-humans, so we crossed the border and took refuge in Lechelle kingdom. However……Lim has yet to get over the attack on the village and is still far from her cheerful self.」

There was one more thing I wanted to ask……but I left it for some other time.
This story is too heavy to stomach.

「I……see. Oh well, I won't take it as merely a traveller's account. I'll try to talk to her……」
「I appreciate the gesture, Seiji.」

Arnold-san was wearing a broad smile, unbefitting his rigid, beast face.

At the same time as our conversation ended, the contest between Bays-san and Lim was about over, too.
From the glances I took time to time, I could tell it was a close contest. However, it was decided with the short spear pointed at Lim's throat.

「——Papa, I lost……but I passed.」
「Is that so? It's my turn then. The least I can do is clear away my daughter's shame.」

Arnold-san clapped my shoulder and leisurely walked forward.
……Please don't expect too much of me, okay?

Because I had replaced Arnold-san, Lim was standing quietly next to me.

「……」

Oh well, it's not like my interpersonal communication skills are zero.
I know that she's depressed but she's keeping it to herself, not letting others know.
It's called putting on a brave face.

「Congratulations, err……Lim. That you were able fight Bays-san barehanded, it was amazing.」

「……E」

She was probably thinking that I wouldn't talk, so she was surprised.

「Just now, I was talking to Arnold-san. He said that it would be better for you to talk to someone your age.」
「Is- that so?」

Un, she's able to communicate a bit……Oh well, isn't it natural?
Earlier, she was probably not able to hold a long conversation, so she cut it short to just greeting——

「I knew I would be exhausted after moving so much. In times like these, nothing beats eating something sweet.」

From the rucksack, I took out an object wrapped in paper.
To tell you the truth, this lunch is Dario-san's work.
Because I didn't know as to how long would the exam take, I had Dario-san make lunch for me. (※ Extra charges)

And this dough was the leftover from last night's menu — special dessert.
Stuffed inside this baked dough were honey-soaked fruits — fruit pie.
Because it was bit-size, there wasn't much volume. When you're tired, however, it's most welcomed.

When I opened the wrapper, sweet fragrance wafted out. Slowly, I held it out in front of Lim.

「E……Is- that okay?」

Her expression was puzzled but her eyes were honest.
With her pin-ears standing erect, her hand slowly reached out.

「Don't be reserved, please. It's totally delicious, isn't it?」

Lim put the pie in her mouth. Her expression after tasting the flavor was so funny compared to her expression from a while ago.

「Thank you very much.」
「Don't be formal, please. We are of same age, after all.」

「Th……anks.」
「Aah, it's good that it suited your taste. You seem to have a sweet tooth.」

……N?
Just now, there was something similar……
No, it must be my imagination.

Thereafter, came the not-so-awkward silence as Lim and I watched Arnold-san's contest.

——Examinees who passed the primary exam.

Seiji・Agatsuma
Lim・Fan
Arnold・Fan

1st Volume, 10th Chapter【The Secondary Exam】

The progression of the story is slow.
Please follow it patiently. (Author's note)

After the primary exam was over, the seven of us, including Bays-san, left the training area.
Unfortunately, three of the examinees were assessed as unacceptable and had to part immediately.

One of them was dejected and left the guild; the other one was brooding over something in front of the bulletin board; the last one picked up a quest paper and took it to the reception desk. The three of them went three separate ways.
I could only wish them good luck.

The rest of us gathered, once again, in the rest space on the first floor.

By the way, Arnold-san used a sword in the contest a while ago.
Actually, he used both the sword and the hand-to-hand combat techniques.

As expected, beastkin race is superior in terms of physical abilities. Seeing the combination of sword and hand-to-hand combat techniques was like seeing an engaging blade dance.
But as you would expect from such a deft spear user as Bays-san.

In the end, both of them received several hits. The training area was even more heated than it was during my turn.
Both of them started laughing at the same time, facing each other. That's how their contest concluded.
According to Bays-san,『continuing any further would be a breach of the code of conduct of an examiner.』
Oi, oi!
I was wrong to evaluate him as a 'bespectacled gentleman', it seems. I'll have to modify it to 'S glasses'.

「——That was surprising. Both the beastkin, especially Arnold-san, were strong but that was within my expectations. As for Seiji-san, the sword skills you displayed……」

Y-You would give me a candy and I would forgive you? I'm not a kid!

「Next is the secondary exam. In this exam, you will receive a rank D quest.」

I see. Upon completing a real quest will we be qualified for promotion, huh?

「The three of you have already demonstrated sufficient ability for rank D. In this secondary exam, I'll be receiving the quest together with you. My role will not be to help you in completing the quest but to ensure that you complete the quest safely.」

Fumu, fumu……But you don't have to come together with us. If it's a monster subjugation quest, we can just turn over the subjugation proof parts as the proof of completion of the quest……

「With the level of ability that you all demonstrated, I'm not worried about you in the least. However, as an examiner, I'll have to be there for that 1 in 10,000 chance of you encountering trouble.」

Oh well, it feels the same as when you receive your provisional licence.

「Now then, you can receive the quest as a group since there are three of you.」

Thus far, I only received quests by myself but you can receive a quest as a group, too, of course.
In case of subjugation of a strong monster, adventurers tend to form a party.
The members seem to divide the reward between them.

As for the quest completion count in respect of rank up, the quest is considered complete for every member of the party.

「You all can discuss before accepting the quest……」

Upon hearing Bays-san's words, the three of us looked at each other.

「Are you fine with it, Lim?」

Arnold-san meant to confirm whether she would be willing to work with a man other than her father.
These words of his were out of concern for his daughter.

Had I not heard the story back there, I wouldn't have understood the meaning underlying his words.

「Just now, I received sweets from Seiji……It was really delicious.」
「Hoho」

Seeing Lim opening up a bit, Arnold-san gazed at me, grinning broadly.
……Suggesting something along the lines, 'the fish took the bait.'

「——Oya, are you by any chance Seiji-san?」

Upon a third person's voice, I turned around to find a familiar face……Err.

……

……Glancing at me.

「Long time no see——Batteau-san.」

To remember the face of an adventurer he met just once, he's cut out to be a merchant.

「I didn't hear from you after that. How are you? Have you gotten accustomed to the life as an adventurer?」
「Thank you for caring. I'm taking the promotion exam to rank D.」
「Is that so?……If I remember correctly, you newly became an adventurer……when you received the parting gift from Jig-san, didn't you?」
「Yes. This past one week, I have been subjugating monsters using that very sword.」
「That's……amazingly fast.」

After quickly greeting Arnold-san and Lim, Batteau-san turned around to face Bays-san.

「We are indebted to you.」
「Not at all, the guild can't exist without clients, after all. Did you visit in relation to another quest?」

These two seemed to be acquainted with each other.
Did they know each other merely as a staff member of the guild and a client?

「Yes. I am going to Pascam port town in the west in relation to procurement, so I came here to request escorts.」
「I see. Pascam highway escort……should be a rank D quest, no?」
「Yes. I want to reach by the sunset, so I'll be departing in the morning. If someone could accept right now, I would be really grateful.」

Bays-san fell silent, pondering over something.

「Guys, a trip to and from Pascam will take 2 days……Are you fine with it?」

The two beastkin were fine with it, so they nodded.
Oh well……I don't have any problem either.
——Dario-san……

「Batteau-san, are you okay with the people here receiving the quest? I'll be going along with them as their examiner. If it won't be inconvenient for you, that is.」
「I see. It's part of the exam, huh?……It may be inappropriate of me to ask in front of them but……According to you, Bays-san, what is the level of ability of these three?」

Thinking from Batteau-san's point of view, who would be entrusting his life and goods to us, he was justified to ask that question.

「Yes, their assessment was perfect……To the extent that I'm contemplating whether or not to become an adventurer again and start training.」

Satisfied, Batteau-san turned around to face us.

「I'm grateful to you for giving me an opportunity to be acquainted with promising adventurers. I thank you in anticipation.」

He bowed courteously.
Aah, that……is an important characteristic of a successful merchant, certainly.

——As it turned out, for the quest, as part of the secondary exam, we became Batteau-san's escorts.
The reward was 1,000 Dalas per day per person. Since it was a 2-day-long round trip, the reward ended up as 2,000 Dalas.
In addition, the client would bear the inn expenses in Pascam.
In case monsters and thieves were taken out en route, the spoils would be distributed amongst the escorts.
Will it really be such a place?

……It was somewhat short of what I could earn in a day but it depended on the type of the quest. If I threw a tantrum, I would be seen as a kid.

As for Bays-san, there would be no reward for him.
They were paid salary by the guild. They could also claim the inn expenses.
Even if he didn't lend a hand, it was still profit to have a rank B equivalent, Bays-san, as an escort, for essentially free.

「It's about time for 8 bells. I'll have you complete your preparations. We will meet at the west gate at 9 bells.」
「Okay」「Un」「Understood」

Now that we were dismissed for the time being, I decided to return to Feeder Pops'.

「Oya, that was quick. What was the result?」
「Oh, you haven't eaten the lunch I made for you, yet, it seems.」

Not just Flower-san, even Dario-san had come out of the kitchen when I returned.
Were they perhaps concerned about my promotion exam……?

「Nope, actually I'll be going to Pascam in the west in relation to the secondary exam. Therefore, I'll be staying there tonight. However, I'll be back by tomorrow night, so I will leave my luggage here. Since I have already paid, I would like you to keep the room reserved.」

I had prepaid for one week. I can't have anyone else use room # 205 for It's my room now.

I went upstairs to the room, stuffed a change of clothes and some medicines into a leather bag, went back downstairs to first floor and headed to the water well to fill the flask.
After the intense body movement earlier, I was feeling thirsty, so I quenched my thirst, too.

Puha~……Alright then, it's about time.

When I went back to the dining area, Dario-san was at the counter, unexpectedly.
Actually, isn't it normal for him to take over from Flower-san since he doesn't cook at this time?

「Leaving so soon? Did you eat the dessert I gave you with the lunch today? As for the feedback, you can give me when you return.」

Oh god……

「I-I'm sorry. That dessert……I gave it to a girl I met at the exam……」
「N? Is that so? What was her reaction?」
「When I saw her eating it, I was regretting the fact that I offered it to her.」
「Haha! I see. Wait……」

Dario-san quickly went inside the kitchen and came back with something, wrapped.

「Take this.」

What Dario-san handed me was fruit pie for two.

「Eh!? Are you sure?」
「Flower and I have already had our fill. Also, I would feel bad charging you for the room without you staying. Don't be modest. All the best for the exam.」

Dario-san saw me off, smiling.
Aah……How do I put it?

——I want to protect this smile.

「Well then, I'll be off.」

1st Volume, 11th Chapter【The Port Town, Pascam】

In the southern part of Merville town is the Commercial district which I'm familiar with.
In the eastern part is the Industrial district where craftsmen and artisans have their workshops.
In the northern part is the Residential district where people abide in.
And then, in the western part is the junction of Commercial and Residential districts, making it bustling.

In Pascam port town in the west, a variety of items is imported via sea route.
Items of daily necessities, utility items, raw materials such as ores and leather, and variegated items are transported to Merville town, and are then delivered throughout Lechelle kingdom.
It's logical for the western part to be bustling for it's a gateway.

I, who had yet to visit this part of the town, had my heart racing when I visited as a Pascam escort.

Hey world, wait for me!

Oh well……I arrived at the west gate ahead of time and was now waiting for others.

After a while, Arnold-san and Lim, Bays-san, and Batteau-san arrived respectively.
Batteau-san arrived in a large, hooded carriage drawn by two horses. To possess such a carriage, Batteau-san seems to be a successful merchant, don't you think?
As expected of Merchant Lv2.

Earlier, Batteau-san said that he was going to Pascam in relation to procurement. However, if you looked at the items inside the horse-drawn carriage, you could guess that he intended to export, too.

Because we were escorts, I was behind the carriage.
The beastkin parent and child were on the left and the right.
Bays-san was sitting leisurely with Batteau-san on the coachman's rack.
Oh well. This time, he's an examiner and accompanying us for free, is that why? However, is that really fine?
As far as the front is concerned, as long as Batteau-san calls out to us if anything happens, there's no problem.
Bays-san, who demanded to be treated as nothing more than air, gave me just one piece of advice.
According to him, there have been incidents of horseshit triggering land mines, so I have to be extra careful.
I hate him already~.
Was the one who nonchalantly advised me to guard the rear not you, Bays-san~?
Someday, I'll make you pay.

After leaving Merville town, we headed straight to the west.

When the lush green filled my view and the silhouette of the town faded, I started feeling homesick even though I hadn't even spent 10 days there.

The speed of the carriage was pretty fast.
According to the feedback from my body, I think it should be about 6~7km per hour.
Walking on foot at such a pace was quite tiring.
If I didn't have the Physical Abilities Enhancement skill, I would most likely be smeared in horseshit by now.

Since the two guarding the left and the right had naturally more strength than a human, they were doing fine.
As for Bays-san, I couldn't see him……He must surely be asleep.

When the shadow cast by the sunlight shrinked, indicating that the sun had reached its zenith, the carriage came to a halt in order to take a short break.
Because the place was slightly inclined, it seemed to be a small hill.
I sat on a rock, where the view was nice, opened the water flask and rehydrated myself.

Whether it was an illusion or not, the soothing view was washing my fatigue off.

When I looked up, the clusters of clouds were gently drifting across the blue sky.
When I lowered my gaze, I could see the far, far away horizon.
When I lowered my gaze further, I could see a forest on the left. The very forest which was my hunting ground — the south forest.
On the right, I could see plains stretching and a river flowing.
The Pascam highway seemed to pass through there.

There was still quite some distance left. However, there seemed to be a post station along the highway.
……According to Batteau-san, we will be having the lunch there.

Built at the post station along the highway is a plain and simple inn for travelers' and merchants' use. It's managed by the villagers who live nearby.
There was a small road branching off the post station to the right. It must lead to the village. It wasn't visible, though——

「Did you find something……?」

——!? The sudden question surprised me so much that the water in my throat shot up my nose.
It was Lim.

「No, I was just thinking how beautiful the scenery is.」
「Is that so? The village where I used to live was just as beautiful……I so miss my village.」

Lim's dark brown hair, bathed in the sunlight, was shining golden just like her eyes.

Her expression was sorrowful. Was she reminded of the demons' invasion of her village?

It was bad of me. But I had no idea that my words would have this effect.

「My pocket is getting too heavy……」
「Eh? Did you say something?」

……This beautiful scenery and Lim's tragic past; I can't take both at the same time, is what I meant but I couldn't say it.

「——The carriage should be leaving anytime now.」
「Un」

I was rather fortunate that Lim didn't get what I said.

Was my mind off because of walking so much so fast?
『What do I do? I'm ashamed to death.』
Is what would have happened.

A while after descending downhill——
We arrived at the post station. It was lunch time.
Batteau-san and Bays-san planned on having the lunch inside.

I and the beastkin family decided to have the lunch, which we brought with us, outside.
It was also our duty as escorts to guard the carriage from those who were up to no good.

I bit into Dario-san's『Alma Chicken Roast Mille Feuille』style pastry.
Because I was told that it would taste even better if warmed, I had someone in the inn heat it over fire.

Is that how it was made on Earth, too?
The pastry comprised several layers. Each layer had a different seasoning, with meat stuffed between layers.
The first layer contained salt and pepper — hors d'oeuvres.
The second layer contained bouillon like sauce. It had a strong taste — main dish.
The third layer——……

「……Dario-san, you're a god, seriously.」

After I was done with the lunch, I took out the fruit pie which I received from Dario-san.
One of the two, who were having their own meals, twitched——which didn't go unnoticed by me. It was Lim.

I decided to eat one myself and offer the rest to Lim.

「Is it really that good?」

I tried to ask again but the pie had already been snatched from my hand.

「Aah, you'll have to share it with Arnold-san this time, however.」
「……Un」

Her expression was so funny, I couldn't keep myself from watching. *gununu*……was her expression when she was handing half the fruit pie to Arnold-san.
It was such a charming sight.

——Once again, we coursed to the west.
While we were advancing along the highway, we could see the silhouette of a dense forest on the left.
Because there were only plains on the right, we were required to be cautious of the left.

I would hate it if thieves showed up.
Killing humans……I'm not sure if I can do it.
Oh well. According to Batteau-san, thieves don't take unnecessary risk of raiding escorted caravans.

I'm probably overthinking because of fatigue——

「——Pugiiiii!」「Pugyuaaa」

Un, it was the monsters that attacked.

Coming out of the forest were four Orcs.
As for their appearance, there was nothing notable. They looked just like a bipedal pig.
Their skin was a mix of ash and mud. Their height was same as an average human. Drool was dribbling down the corner of their mouths as if they were excited.

They were holding clubs in their hands.
As for their skills——《Stick Arts Lv1》.
They had varying skill points（6~8/10）.

Stick Arts, huh?
There's no harm in having one more skill. Should I steal then?

「Seiji, Lim! Take on a monster each. I'll take on two.」

Arnold-san, who was guarding the left of the carriage, charged first.
Followed by me and then Lim.

I pulled the whetted Baselard out of its sheath and closed the distance while observing the swinging club of the enemy.
They seem to be strong physically……However, if they can't hit, it's of no use.
The swung club hit the ground.
After I dodged the attack by jumping to the side, I swung my sword before the enemy could regain its posture, sending its right arm flying.
I touched it in the meantime. However, it resulted in failure.

……It's not like I'm ruing.
Mopping it up was now the priority.
The orc, which was groaning upon losing its right arm, lost its head next. Thereafter, I shifted my attention to Lim.

Right at that moment, the Orc, which was wielding a club, received Lim's fist.
The blow was heavier than what I saw in the contest earlier.
Well……She has the Magic Power Conversion skill, after all.
Mana is converted at the point of impact and added to the attack power, most likely.
The Orc, whose head had completed one full revolution, collapsed.
The monster, which had collapsed with a thud, was breathing faintly.
I quietly touched it with my hand and stabbed my sword into it.
——Alright, successfully stolen.

By the way, a skill can't be stolen from a dead opponent.
There's no doubt about it for I have already tried it.

Thereafter, I turned to Arnold-san. Apparently, my worries were unfounded.
When I turned to him, he was holding an oddly curved blade. The Orc was lying, bisected.
There was no need to lend him a hand.
I wanted to steal from all four of them but we were acting as a group.
I was able to steal from one, though. It's satisfactory in itself.

「Indeed——……You all really are strong.」

Batteau-san admired us, gasping.
Bays-san didn't come down the carriage.
He probably knew that it would be alright.

「Orc subjugation should be a rank D quest……」

I muttered to myself.

「However, Orcs don't come out of the forest much, they only appear on the highway……Should I……keep something for verification at Pascam……Should I?」

The bodies of the Orcs didn't have anything that could be used as raw materials and we didn't receive any subjugation quest either, so we left their bodies as is and proceeded.
The forest, which could be seen on the left, disappeared. After a while, we caught a glimpse in front of us on the horizon.

After walking for one more hour……we finally arrived at Pascam port town.
It wasn't on the scale of Merville town. However, the spectacle of a port was exciting, nevertheless.

Because it was about sunset, the sun setting in the shoreline painted the port in a romantic color.
Since the ships normally arrive during the day, it's usually lively at that time. At this time, it

seemed deserted.
Oh well, it's not like I came here to play.

After Batteau-san arranged for an inn, he went to deliver the goods on the carriage to the trading firm at the scheduled time. After we escorted him to the trading firm, we were relieved for the day.
Tomorrow morning, we would likewise go to the trading firm to stock up the procured goods. After that, we would depart for Merville town. It would be quite a busy.

Bays-san had to check up on Pascam Adventurer's Guild, so he separated from us.
Unlike Bays-san, who had it easy on the coachman's rack, we were tired of walking (or it might be just me), so I made a beeline for the inn.

I entered the inn, which had already been arranged for, and was led to the room.
Judging from the construction, this inn looked to be of higher grade than Feeder Pops'.
However, it all comes down to the food.

Since it was an inn located in a port town, it only had fish.

『Who made this crude thing!?』

I was hoping it wouldn't come to that.
……I won't be able to say it.

——More importantly, it was a room for three.
Oh well. The client was paying for the inn, I couldn't tell them to arrange a separate room each for us escorts.

Also……Lim didn't show any signs of rejection upon sharing a room with me.
Was that the effect of regular dose of fruit pie?
Or was she at ease because Arnold-san was there?
It was probably both.

Hey, there's a girl here, right? I mean……It's about time for bath……I can't do it inside the room……
The attendant probably read my mind, so he said.

「It must be tiring coming here all the way from Merville town. There's a bath facility at this inn. Do use it, please. It will be charged additionally.」

……There is?

After all five of us gathered, we had the dinner. It was quite delicious.
The fish was fresh. Lim, who was a cat herself, especially liked it.
When the fish grilled with fragrant grass was served, she couldn't suppress the twinkling in her eyes.

After I was done with the regular maintenance of the sword, I took bath and changed into

comfortable clothes.
I massaged my feet a bit, which went stiff after traveling all the way on foot, and threw myself on the bed as I would have to be up early morning tomorrow.

After I lied down, I decided to confirm today's spoils before going to sleep.

Name: Seiji・Agatsuma
Race: Human
Age: 18
Job: Adventurer (Rank E+)
Unique: Scholar's Knowledge
Skill(s)
・Thief's Godly Skill (Riot Grasper) Lv2 (6/50)
・Physical Abilities Enhancement Lv3 (5/150)
・Sword Arts Lv2 (25/50)
・Abnormal Status Resistance Lv2 (1/50)
・Stick Arts Lv1 (7/10)

I still have six attempts left but there's no helping it.
The moment I closed my eyes, the feeling of fatigue subsided and a floating sensation overcame as I fell asleep.

「——……U?……What……」

I heard a voice……What was that?
I, who was hazy after having just woken up, shook my head and looked around the room.
It was dark outside, so it should still be midnight.

「——My bad. I seem to have woken you up.」
「Err……Arnold-san? Just now, that voice……」

Under the moonlight shining dimly through the window, Arnold-san was sitting on a chair by Lim's bed, scratching his head *puripuri* apologetically.

「Lim had a nightmare just now. She was dreaming of the time when our village was attacked.」

Again, some words full of anguish leaked out of Lim's mouth while she was asleep.

「N……o……Mama……where……Stop, please stop……Hot, it hurts……Papa, where……」

Arnold-san grasped Lim's hand.
Her breathing gradually calmed as the pained expression on her face gradually receded.

「Umm, now that I think about it, I haven't heard about……Lim's mother——」
「——She died. To save……her only daughter.」
「I- see……」
「Seiji, I'm sorry to disturb you. With me here, she'll be fine. You should go back to sleep.」

Has Arnold-san been doing this all night!?

「Umm……I don't think I can do much but……If there's anything I can do, please tell me.」

Such words came out my mouth subconsciously.
Being an outsider, there wasn't much I could do.

「……Is that so? If you don't mind, can you please caress this child's head……My wife- used to do that.」

Puzzled, I put my hand on Lim's head and caressed.
While I was caressing her silky hair, I gently touched her fluffy ears.
As her cat ears twitched, Lim muttered something.

「……Ma-ma……Thank goodness……」

Tears ran down her cheek.

「Thanks, Seiji.」
「Not at all……Good night.」

I went back to the bed and kept staring at my palm, recalling the sensation.

——Really……My pocket is getting too heavy……

1st Volume, 12th Chapter【Going Well, Returning Well…】

I have revised a part regarding the usage of the guild card as a proof of a person's identification. (Author's note)

——In the morning, the sunlight forcibly penetrated through the window and infringed upon the room.
I, who was sleeping on the bed which was directly in line with the sun and the window, was roasted by the sunbeam.

Pascam has a belfry to announce time. However, before it was 6 in the morning, I had woken up.

……O-Oou

Drowsily, I turned my neck around to see whether Arnold-san spent the whole night on the chair or not.
When I crawled out of the bed, I sensed a presence behind me.

「Good morning.」
「Morning- already……?」

It was now confirmed that Arnold-san had put the chair back and returned to his bed.
He fell back asleep and started snoring.

I went to the window and gazed outside.
Pascam port town has water-eroded terrain.
For this reason, the seashore is slightly inclined.

Because the inn was located on a remote hill, the whole port town was within my view.
Upon the sunlight, which was being reflected through the sea that was acting like a mirror, I squinted my eyes.

「Sometimes, waking up early can be good~.」

I kept looking dazedly, doing nothing in particular, until the sun was completely out of the horizon.

This is……the rising sun!

——6 bells resounded in the port town.

At 3rd or 4th bell, Lim began moving restlessly and lifted the upper half of her body.

Beastkin are just like humans. However, cat beastkin are markedly different from wolf beastkin……Where Arnold-san looked like he could stab you with his claws, Lim acted just

like a cat. Her *unyu~n* was especially cute.

「Good mowning.」
「……Good morning.」

After greeting briefly, I took a glance at Lim's face.
Un……She seems to be alright.

Upon my looking at her like a mother, she tilted her head and retired from the bed.

「——Papa, it's morning. Wake up.」

After getting shaken *yusayusa* by Lim, Arnold-san woke up.
I thought about stopping her but eventually decided to keep quiet and observe.

「……Un? Aah……sorry. At this age, getting up early is such a pain.」

His hearty yawn reminded me of my father.

When we were having breakfast on the first floor, Bays-san shared with us what he learnt at the guild yesterday.

「After yesterday's attack by the Orcs, the Pascam guild has issued the Orc subjugation quest. Lately, there have been frequent incidents of the Orcs attacking people on the highway. The cause is unknown. Therefore, on our return trip, we will have to be fully prepared.」

I see. So the reward of subjugating four Orcs……went to waste.

「I have the quest paper with me. If you obtain the subjugation proof parts, I'll be able to process the quest at the Merville guild. Until the cause has been ascertained, the quest will be treated as a continuous quest.」

In situations like this does Bays-san look like a staff member.
Oh well. I doubt the bodies of the Orcs, which I left behind by the roadside, are still intact.

After completing the preparations for departure at the inn, we escorted Batteau-san to the trading firm at the scheduled time.

After skillfully shifting the goods, which had already been loaded on a pallet, to the carriage, we bade farewell to Pascam port town and left for Merville.

——We smoothly advanced through the highway while keeping our eyes on the dense forest which was now to our right.

Arnold-san, who was guarding the right of the carriage, which was the same side where we were attacked from by the Orcs yesterday, pulled out his sword from the sheath on his waist, showing his cautious intent.

「……Someone's approaching us.」

Saying that, I readied the Baselard with my eyes fixed on the forest.

——Jumping out of the forest were two silhouettes.
They were not the monsters.

Thieves……?
Tensed, I tightened my grip on the sword even more.
However, their first words weren't『hand over everything you have』.

「He-Help! Help us!」

Somehow……this was an even more disturbing sign.

The one who was shouting for help was panting heavily as if he was completely out of breath.

「B-B-Blo……My friends. Just one……」

They were a duo. Both had the status of an adventurer.
One was a rank C while the other was a rank D+.

Arnold-san, however, didn't let his guard down and had his sword pointed at the two.
Bays-san descended off the coachman's rack, cautiously approached the two and asked for the proof of their identification.

……Ah, I get it.
Although I know from《Scholar's Knowledge》that they are adventurers, the possibility that they are thieves can't normally be disregarded.
Had we let our guard down at their act, we might have lost our lives.

The two took their guild cards out of their chests which displayed their names and ranks.
Because the card doesn't react to anyone but the owner, it confirmed their status of an adventurer.
Arnold-san, too, lowered his sword.

「Sorry for earlier. So, what happened?」
「W-We, friends, accepted the Orc subjugation quest. When we entered the forest……an Orc……suddenly……a Blood Ogre……」
「Wha……t……?」

Bays-san was frowning without even attempting to hide it.
It's my first time seeing this look on his face.

「Why would a Blood Ogre……appear in this area? The Orcs are their food……Now I get why the Orcs have been showing up on the highway……They were driven out of their habitat.」

While Bays-san was muttering to himself, the two adventurers asked in a quivering voice.

「I-Is there anyone i-in your group who's able to kill the Blood Ogres? We have one more friend, we lost them while escaping……」
「Everyone here is taking the promotion exam to rank D. A Blood Ogre is a monster that can only be subdued by multiple rank B adventurers……」

Bays-san cut his words, nimbly took his short spear out and dusted it off.

「It'll be a bit difficult to do it alone.」

Bays……san?

「Guys, take Batteau-san and get away from here quickly. And you, adventurers, return to Pascam and report at the guild immediately.」

He fixed his glasses and issued the instructions.

「Aah……If you safely complete Batteau-san's escort quest, you'll pass the promotion exam. Please complete the formal procedure in Merville.」

「……Whenever possible, save your life. In case of danger, turn your tail and run away. Thereafter, inform the guild of the situation. Do you understand?」

While saying so, he ran off into the direction pointed out by the adventurers.
Why……Even though he was sitting on the coachman's rack, relaxed, just a while ago.

「——Yareyare……What an incompetent man. What kind of examiner leaves the examinees in the middle of an exam?」

Glancing alternately, Arnold-san uttered such words.
Feeling the old scar on his ear, he tightened his lips.

「Seiji, Lim, escort the carriage through the highway.」
「……Arnold-san?」
「I'll go and bring that examiner-dono back.」
「Eh……Wha!?」

The scary-faced beastkin said so and vanished off into the forest.

What……?
This situation.

……It'll be alright, I think. After all, Arnold-san should be a rank B equivalent for he fought Bays-san on equal footing.

We couldn't afford to leave Batteau-san on his own, of course, so we proceeded.
The post station should be ahead. Should we wait there for the two of them to return……?

While I was thinking so, I caught a shadow moving through the corner of my eye. No more time to think.

「——Hey, where are you going……Lim!」

I ran after Lim and grabbed her arm to detain her.
……It's not like I don't understand how she's feeling.
However, Lim is the weakest amongst us.
I can't allow her to go.

「Let me go……If anything happens to Papa……I'll hate you……!」

When tears glistened in her eyes, I loosened the grip of my palm on Lim's arm. For a moment, I couldn't take my eyes off my hand.

「Thanks.」

——Just now, that word……What did it mean?
I recalled the sensation on my palm from last night.
Even though the night had passed, I could still not shake it off.
Was she thanking me only to go and die right after? Why was she thanking me?
I clenched my fist and took a deep breath to calm my heart down.

When I turned around to Batteau-san, he said something idiotic yet miraculous.

「Oh, I forgot to buy one item, I have to go back to Pascam. Those two adventurers are returning to Pascam, right? Then I'll ask them to accompany me.」
「A-Aah」
「Well then, Seiji-san. Until your examiner returns, the escort quest shall remain pending.」

After bowing unnaturally, Batteau-san turned the carriage around and rushed into the direction of the adventurers who were heading back to Pascam.

Hey……Why is everyone trying to act so cool?
In but a few moments, I was the only one left on the highway.
Even though I just wanted to give my all to the quest.

……Indeed……Nothing goes the way you want it to.
With the legs, which had recovered after having a night's sleep, I kicked the ground and took off.

Destination——Forest, of course.
I can still……catch up.

1st Volume, 13th Chapter【That Which must be Protected】

This time, it's rather long. (Author's note)

I ran and ran inside the forest which didn't even have an animal trail.
After getting scratched by the twigs, my body was lacerated all over; however, it didn't matter.

I caught up with the figure running in front of me and called out when I was by the side of the figure; Lim, that was.

「Don't be so reckless.」
「——!? ……Un」

After receiving a short reply, I searched for the signs of the two who had preceded us, remaining vigilant of the surroundings all the while.

An ear piercing roar, like a distant thunder, resounded.
The vibrating air was forcing the blood flowing inside my body to resonate.
Having sensed the abnormality, my heart accelerated the blood circulation, quickening my heartbeat.

「——That way.」

My eyes met Lim's. No sooner, we rushed toward the epicentre of the roar from awhile ago.
I don't want to overthink, however……the roar——sounded overlapping.

A bad premonition……almost always comes to pass.
Terribly enough, there existed a pair (duet).

When the thickly grown trees and shrubs thinned, two red silhouettes could be seen.
As for their height……it seemed to be about 4m.

Somewhat……they resembled the『Red Ogre』from the folktale. (TN: The red ogre, blue ogre tale. Can also be found in Ore Monogatari)
Their face looked like a human's; their eyes cloudy and stagnant; tusks protruding out of their mouth; their body dyed red as if with blood.
Their clothing minimal; only a piece of skin wrapped around their waist……Eh? What they were grasping in their hand was a club far, far bigger than the one which the Orcs had.

And finally, their most distinguishing feature was a huge horn growing on their head.
An ogre, indeed.

I remember seeing this several cm thick horn on the guild's tradeable materials list.

There were two more rather familiar silhouettes.
Bays-san and Arnold-san.
Actually……there was one more figure, which was unfamiliar, belonging to a female.

I see. She must be the friend of that adventurer duo. A rank D……She was sitting tight on the ground, her body trembling.

「Yareyare. Eventually, all the members are here. In the capacity of an examiner, I can't give you appreciative assessment, however……in all honesty, I'm grateful. It's quite difficult to escape from two monsters.」
「Earlier, didn't I tell you to run away? ……Even so, you are here, Seiji.」

Having already retracted open hostility, the Blood Ogres had a perplexed expression about their face upon the arrival of the reinforcements.

「What you said were but words, Arnold-san……Being a father, you were well aware of how your daughter would act. Please don't go running around with your life in your hands.」
「……Sorry.」

Saying that much, I pulled the baselard out of its sheath and held it just above midsection.

「「Guruaaaaaaaaaaa」」

「——Lim, stay together with that woman.」
「……I'll fight, too.」
「Listen to me!」

After all, these enemies were a bit too much for Lim.
When I raised my voice, Lim didn't resist any further. She hurried to the woman and lent her a shoulder for her to stand up.

——Well then, let's do this!
I lined up next to Bays-san and Arnold-san, keeping the enemies from focus-targeting.

First things first. Their skills……
《Stick Arts Lv2 (37/50)》
《Vitality Enhancement Lv2 (32/50)》
Damn……They're high.
With their body covered in thick muscles, their physical abilities must naturally be considerable, too.
To tell you the truth, I could feel cold sweat running down my back.

《Vitality Enhancement》——enhances self-healing ability.

This……

「Even if you injure the Blood Ogres, they immediately heal themselves. Moreover, their blood contains a paralytic poison, so please be careful not to come in contact with their

blood. It can even penetrate through the skin.」

As expected of Bays-san. His knowledge about monsters is abundant. I'm not sure whether it's due to him being a staff member of the guild or a former adventurer. However, I'm thankful for the information on the monsters I'm encountering for the first time.
The healing injuries part must be related to Vitality Enhancement.

Thus far, I haven't stolen a skill with the objective of defeating a monster.

However, an enemy is, in the end, an enemy.
All that can be stolen will be stolen.
I'll weaken them as much as I can and then kill them after I strip them naked.
Although the success rate is low, this skill is effective in battle, nonetheless.
The skill constitution of the second one must be the same but let's confirm just in case.

……What the-

《Stick Arts Lv2 (36/50)》
《Vitality Enhancement Lv2 (31/50)》
《Bond of Blood (Blood Alliance) Lv2 (12/50)》

As for the first two skills, although the skill points were slightly different, there was not much difference.
The main issue was the third one.

Somehow……it's the same as mine.
I don't mean exactly 'same'; however, like in my case, it has a pseudonym attached.
Is it a rare skill?

《Bond of Blood (Blood Alliance)》——In the event of a comrade's death, all the abilities shall increase in level.

……This skill is quite dicey.
In order for visual confirmation to be possible, I'll have to kill the other one. This time, however, the priority is to win.

It'll be a waste but I'll have to kill this one first.
However, no can say……as to how the actual battle will unfold.

「It was a good decision to have Lim-san pull back. A Blood Ogre will be a difficult opponent for her. Arnold-san and I will hold back one monster each. Since you have shown to be more flexible, you will be acting as a shortstop, interrupting both——please!」

That's what I wanted.
……The moment I find a gap, I'll steal their skills!

The two red ogres roared and simultaneously rushed onward, their gigantic bodies leaning forward.

Defying their weight, which shouldn't be light, they chomped the distance in a moment.
Their clubs aiming at us——

——We weren't kind enough as to wait for them to swing it down.
I leapt back while the other two sprang left and right, dodging the attack.

The one with the rare skill was facing Arnold-san.
Bays-san took on the other one.

Other than the the club hitting the ground, there was rigoring silence.
Unaffected, Arnold-san kicked with all his might.
The low kick from a thoroughly trained body of a beastkin contained tremendous power.

The ankle of the Blood Ogre, which was thick like a log, trembled upon impact as a cracking sound reverberated.
If it were me……my ankle would have broken, surely.
Staggering, his enemy got down to one knee which he followed up with the lopping curved sword.
However, it was blocked by the club. It was put to an end by sheer strength.

As it is, whether I, who possess Physical Abilities Enhancement skill, will be able to match their naturally pure strength or not, there's no knowing.
The ankle, which should have been badly injured, had healed between attack and defense as it calmly got up on its feet as if nothing happened.

Bays-san mowed the short spear slantingly down. For the second strike, he rotated the spear and struck with the extraordinary centrifugal force.
Both the strikes were blocked but the combo had yet to end. The third strike, a full powered stab, successfully penetrated into the enemy's body.

However, due to its thick skin and muscles, it couldn't penetrate deep into the body.

In order to remove the annoying protuberance stuck into its body, the Blood Ogre stretched its hand and shook it off to pull the spear out.
Its blood gushed out. Immediately after, however, it came to a stop as its wound gradually shrank.

Hey, that natural healing ability is not acting its level!

I can't be the only one to cower facing the oppressive Blood Ogres.
With this, almost everything had been visually confirmed.
Even if the enemies weakened out of nowhere, I wouldn't necessarily be suspected amidst the ongoings.
——All that can be stolen will be stolen.

「Ooooraa」

I walloped the ground with my leg, which had stiffened under anxiety, and galloped to the

battlefield
As a shortstop, I threw myself into the 2-on-2 battle.

First, I decided to focus on Bays-san's enemy. Slipping through the whirlwinds from the reeling spear and club, I closed in on the enemy's flank.

「Seyaaaa!」

I slipped the baselard, which I was grasping in my right hand, into its flesh and slid it.
With a metal grating *gigigigi*sound, I drew a slash. However, it hardly left any gash.
Just how hard is its skin? Or rather, its muscles.
So much so that I could hardly reach its organs.

On the contrary……If I do it poorly, the sword may end up broken.
However……——I have successfully stolen one.

Vitality Enhancement……If mastered, this skill would truly become inhuman.
With this……the injuries of this fellow won't heal anymore.

Alright——next!

After landing with a side slashing stance, I moved perpendicularly.
This time, I'll plunder the one possessing the rare skill.

Since it's covered in thick skin and bulky muscles, I have to attack where it's weak——its neck.

The rare skill ogre, who was engaged in the battle with Arnold-san, smacked the club mercilessly.
The moment it was drawn to the limit, he parried it with the curved sword.
Such a meaty sword, the blade of which was about 1m long, is fitting for a beastkin.
Even the Sword Arts skill of Arnold-san is considerable.

Shifting the trajectory, I ran over the sunk in club. Then, stepping on the enemy's arm, I jumped.

Reaching the neck of an over 4m high body in a breath, I stabbed the sword in with all my might.

guburi……Although my palm could feel it pushing through the flesh, I knew it wasn't over yet.

「Not yeeet!」

When I was trying to push it further in, the Blood Ogre hurriedly shook its arm off in order to squash me.
Before it could pettanko (flatten) me, I pulled the sword out, landed on the ground and opened up the distance.

……Was I able to steal nothing from this fellow?
With this, the number of times the skill had been invoked was 4.
With a success rate of merely 30%……there's no helping it.
I knew it. With the success rate this low, it wouldn't work when it mattered the most.

Now then, what do I do?

Leaving the one with the rare skill for last would be troublesome; therefore, I have to finish it off first. However, it still has Vitality Enhancement skill left.
The wound on its neck had already stopped bleeding.

After killing the other one that has weakened, the three of us should be able to encircle this fellow……I think. Although all of its abilities will supposedly increase in level……there must be a limitation.

We have the advantage of numbers——so there shouldn't be any problem.

「——The healing of this Blood Ogre seems to have dulled. Compared to awhile back, it's powerless; therefore, we should concentrate our power on the remaining one.」

At Bays-san's words, Arnold-san and I nodded.
Due probably to the wound on its neck, the enemy wavered, resulting in its strike slipping through. Without a moment's delay, we chipped in the offensive on the weakened Blood Ogre.

「Sei!」
「Haa!」

The howling short spear tore into the Blood Ogre's leg.
Thereafter, with the enemy's stance disrupted, Arnold-san and I rushed on vigorously.
After a number of sword strikes, its right hand, which it was wielding the club in, hurled into the air, severed.
The offensive had yet to end, of course.

The three of us launched the finishing strikes synchronously.
Two aimed at its heart.
While I at its neck.

Stepping on Arnold-san's shoulder, I reached sufficient height.

「Here goes the first one!」

Having received the feedback of muscles severing, I swang the baselard with all my might and pulled it out.
At that moment, following an unpleasant 'bekyo!' sound, something surged up my palm.
A foreboding sensation of metal snapping.

Wha……t?

The parting gift I received from Jig-san……from the base——came apart!

And there's one more monster still left……Fuck!
I clicked my tongue soundlessly and rushed down to the two.

「Guaaaaruaaaaa!」

——Right then.

An agonizing metallic cry resounded. A reflexive impulse to cover my ears assaulted me.
The Blood Ogre, which was supposed to be dead, no idea how or why, pushed the spear and the sword sticking into its chest further in, and spat more than a mouthful of blood into the air.
Enshrouding us in the fog of blood.

「Shi……Guys! Please get away, quick!」

Upon Bays-san's words, everyone got away.
Even so, our bodies were already drenched. Damn it!

「……Kuh- my body- numb……」
「Nuu……」

Groaning, the two leaked out such words.
What?
Ah……Paralytic poison!?
That it didn't work on me……Was that due to Abnormal Status Resistance skill?

That was probably its last struggle. The Blood Ogre collapsed onto the ground and ceased moving.

This is bad……

「Gi……Gi- gurua- gugaaaaaaaaa!!」

Resounded a cry that could freeze the blood flowing inside one's body.
The state of the remaining monster……was strange.

Its bright red skin turned dark red. Its red horn was dyed jet black.
I could feel the intimidating air on my skin.
Hey……it's not a different monster, is it?

——Is it……《Bond of Blood (Blood Alliance)》's effect?

Still, still——
If the three of us challenged it in perfect condition, we could win.
However——

「Ooooooooooaaaaaa」

Visibly maddened, the monster howled and charged at us.
With two of us paralyzed, we won't be able to cope with it, surely.
If that's the case……I shouldn't go, right?

Totally unarmed, I went to confront the Blood Ogre.
I had no intention of clashing head on, of course.
However, I had now visually confirmed the rare skill.
If……if only——I somehow manage to steal it.

Slipping through the blow encapsulating its increased strength and speed, I managed to touch the body of the enemy, somehow.

However——it resulted in failure.

For a moment, I was forced to stop and think.
So……is there really no way to turn it around?

The enemy, the power of whose was not abating in the least, opened a fierce attack on the two behind me.
The two picked their weapons back up. However, they didn't seem as agile.

——First hit.
Sto-p……

———Second hit.
Sto-……

———————Third hit.

After getting thrashed by the club and flicked into the air, the bodies of the two cruelly crashed into the tree trunks.

「——Stop it, you! You goddamned ogre, aaah!」

That was a lack of plan.
Hitting barehanded was foolish.

To hit the Blood Ogre hard, I raised my fist overhead and threw myself into it.

Unfortunately, however, I ate a direct hit of the side sweeping club. Just like a ball, I bounced off and tumbled onto the ground.
I felt an acute pain of bones breaking.

「——Ow~~! Gu……a」

However, I wasn't dead yet.
It was an opportune decision to have had a proper armor made.

Not far, Arnold-san and Bays-san could be seen, collapsed.

「——Papa!」

Lim ran up to Arnold-san.
Even though I told her to stay back……
Better yet, Lim and that adventurer woman should already have run away.

「Gu……u……? Ha……Lim, run- away. Don't mind me.」
「No……no……Don't leave……don't leave me alone……」

Trying hard to breathe, Arnold-san coughed up blood and dyed the ground red.
His arm was crooked, his leg bleeding.

「……No……no way……never……Noooo!」

She screamed in denial.
She was wailing.

The air about Lim changed completely.
There was no change in her appearance, however……something felt off.

By the grace of the skill stolen from the Blood Ogre, my body seemed to have recovered to the point of moving.
I have no idea as to what she intends to do……

「Hey, Lim, what ar——……」

The moment I tried to grab the arm of Lim who was walking unsteadily *furufuru* toward the Blood Ogre——
Her fist cut through the air.

Had I not evaded, it would surely have hit my face.
This……Don't tell me——

「Hinder……hurt……go……care……——」

I couldn't bear to look at Lim, who was visibly in pain, as she dashed straight to the Blood Ogre.

「Aaaaaaaa!」

This is perhaps the effect of……《Bersekification》. (TN: Changed Berserkization to Berserkification)
As for the invocation condition, it may vary depending on the circumstances of acquisition of this a posteriori skill.
It was probably when her village was invaded that she first acquired this skill.
If that's the case……then, is having your closed one's life exposed to danger the invocation condition……?

No, it's not the time to think. If I don't stop her——

Dogon!

「Na——」

Lim's fist crashed into the Blood Ogre's abdomen as a bam resounded.
Followed by a roundhouse kick, followed by a palm heel; she attacked the enemy incessantly.

Although the person loses reasoning……Berserkification somehow grants the person incredible power.

Unfortunately, she was still lacking to be this Blood Ogre's opponent.
Besides, no matter how you looked at it, Lim's body was taking the toll.

「Seiji……please. Take Lim and escape.」
「Arnold-san……」
「If she continued to fight in this state, she would collapse before long……Please.」
「But then, what of you two……?」
「Don't……mind us, please. Miserable it may be……but that's an adventurer's life; full of dangers. Please train well and grow into a fine adventurer. You have our best wishes.」

……Why do you two have to try so badly to look cool?

But you know what?
I'm infected with this disease, too.

It's natural to be attracted to 'cool'.
When you were young, didn't you unconditionally long for 'cool'?
Even when you grew up, you had a trace of it left somewhere.
However, when you realized that they were nothing but wild delusions……deep down your heart……it hurt.

They were wild delusions……only because they couldn't be realized.

They『were』.

Now, however, making those wild delusions a reality is no longer a dream.
……So then, would it be wise if I ran away?

No, that's not what I longed for.
If I turned my back……the disease I'm infected with would die.

——If I did……wouldn't I be a boring normie?

I firmly refuse!

For me——

For my sake——

I can't run away from this place.

……After all, I have to look cool.

「Arnold-san, there's one thing……which I would like to try. And regardless of the result……I will have to borrow your sword——」

I have《Sword Arts Lv2 (25/50)》. If I could add his——

The toll on Lim's body had surpassed her limit. The Blood Ogre started to press her. Having received a hit of the club, her body was sent flying.

Somehow, I caught her midair and landed safely.
I pulled Lim, who was still riotous, into my embrace, caressed her head and told her 'it's okay' many times over.
Having gradually regained her calm, Lim collapsed after the backlash of the toll kicked in.

Laying her beside Arnold-san, I spoke a few words of gratitude.

「Lim, you did well……Next time, you won't have to lose your closed ones. I won't let it happen.」

I turned around to face the howling Blood Ogre and held the large curved sword up.

……It's alright. My body can keep up with this Lv.

「——Is this what you call breaking through the barrier?」

「Guruaa! Buguruaaaagaaaaaaaa!!」

「You have gotten more noisy than awhile back……don't you think?《Bond of Blood (Blood Alliance)》……huh? Even though I have failed to steal it, doesn't mean I don't have other skills ——」

Without averting my eyes from the enemy which had turned dark red, I spoke filled with confidence.

「Your face is flushed red——I see. Are you mad that your partner is dead?」

——An air trembling roar resounded, kicking the battle to death off.

「……It's finale!!」

Name: Seiji・Agatsuma

Race: Human
Age: 18
Job: Adventurer (Rank E+)
Unique: Scholar's Knowledge
Skill(s)
・Thief's Godly Skill (Riot Grasper) Lv2 (8/50)
・Physical Abilities Enhancement Lv3 (5/150)
・Sword Arts Lv3 (5/150)
・Abnormal Status Resistance Lv2 (2/50)
・Stick Arts Lv1 (7/10)
・Vitality Enhancement Lv2 (32/50)

Riot Grasper Chapter 14

1st Volume, 14th Chapter【The Conclusion】

——Just like I thought.

After my Sword Arts skill had reached Lv2, the skill points of Sword Arts Lv1 skills stolen from Smagobs started accumulating.
Arnold-san's Sword Arts skill stood at Lv2 (20/50)——After adding Lv1 (10/10), the accumulated skill points reached a total of 30.
……It turned out well.

Let's try——the power of Sword Arts Lv3.

With my eyes affixed, I grasped the curved sword firmly with both my hands.
Since this enemy had no skill for me to steal, there was no need for me to have one of my hands free.
In the first place, this sword was meant to be wielded in both hands.
The blade alone measured 1m. Combined with the hilt, it reached 1.20m.

The wound on my body had considerably recovered.
Although I only had gratitude for Vitality Enhancement skill, the speed of recovery wasn't same as the Blood Ogres' from awhile ago.
Because their natural healing ability is superior to mine, a human's, is that why?
Oh well. It's not like I'm contending with this fellow in a fair competition, so there's no problem.
……All I have to do is to keep myself from getting hit.

「Fu!」

Keeping the bare minimum air in my lungs and blowing the rest out, I closed in.
With my eyes affixed, I charged at the opponent undauntedly.

I didn't want to involve those behind me.
In order to restrict the enemy's movement, I scraped the flesh on its thigh, launching a combo with the curved sword.
I slashed its muscles, which had swelled as if its stats had increased upon leveling up, with the second strike while we crossed each other.

「Guoa」

Having gotten slashed twice at exactly the same spot, its muscles ruptured as the toughness of its flesh gave in.
How do I put it……The sword……felt so familiar as if it were an extension of my arm.

With more power——
With more precision——

And with more speed——
I hit——the enemy.

The enemy's rage erupted as it violently swept the club it was wielding over.
The violent sweep created a whirlwind which could pulverize anyone who stood in its way.
If I had only sheer willpower, I would be no match for it.
However……I have no intention of losing.

Without a care, I stepped into the circumference which the sweeping club of the Blood Ogre created with itself at the centre.
I didn't take on the vector of the force from the front. I dodged the attack completely by tilting.
It whistled past my ear. Immediately after, an infringing cloud of dust rose by my side.

Each of the blows was heavier than the last.
However, after a number of blows——

「Guoooooo……a……?」

With a thud, the huge club fell onto the ground, rolling.
The opponent, not knowing as to what had happened, got up and checked its right fist which it was grasping the club with.

Five fingers which should have been there.
——Were nowhere to be found.

「Are you looking for something? ——You lost your club……? You dropped it there.」

The enemy turned slightly rigid.
Meanwhile, I supplied oxygen to my body which was breathless after such an intense workout.

Silence ensued. Shortly after, the place was filled once again with intimidating, growling sound.
The growls carried anger……and a tinge of fear.

The fingers, which should have regenerated by now, didn't. Enraged, the enemy recklessly brandished its right arm.
For the attack was reckless, it didn't feel threatening.
However, it didn't forget to pick the club back up with its left arm.

While dodging the recklessly brandished right arm, I positioned the sword overhead, raised a foot lightly and bounded off, closing the distance.
I brandished the held aloft sword to mercilessly severe the opponent's left wrist which was trying to pick the club up.
However, I couldn't cut it off in one strike. Since it was a severing motion, the hilt of the sword was now upturned to its left hand——so I inverted the blade of the sword.

Within point one second of slashing from overhead, I slashed back from below.
The sword's jaw crunched the same spot of the opponent's wrist, cutting it off halfway.

With this, it'll be impossible for it to hold the club.

However, it was not over yet.

Advancing a step, I dealt the finishing strike from overhead, completely severing the wrist.

「Giooooooooo!」

Secret Technique——《Blooming Flowers (Hundred Breaker)》

I'm not pleased with the processing capability of my brain.
At most, it should be《Three Step Cut》.

Oh well. With this, the enemy's offensive ability will plummet down.
At any rate, it won't be able to use either of its hands to wield.

The Blood Ogre let out an agonizing cry. Still, it didn't lose its fighting spirit.
……I can't afford to give it time.

——I have to decide the battle in a go.

Lunging into the enemy's bosom, I aimed at the other leg than the one I had scraped earlier.
Not longer able to bear the weight of its gigantic body, it fell down to both of its knees.

Slipping through both of its swinging arms, I finally aimed at its head.

Now……it'll be over!
All my might contained in a strike. Horizontally, I drew my sword at the Blood Ogre's neck ——

——For a moment, the ogre's lips curled……into a smile.
A screech of metal frictioning against metal resounded.

Its sole horn blackened, blocking my attack.
When the attack, which contained all my might, was blocked, an unimaginable shock transmitted through the hilt, making me drop the sword.

——Ah! My hand has gone numb……

Not missing the opportunity, the opponent swang its arm at me who was now defenseless.
As I wasn't able to dodge it, I received the hit directly. A cloud of dust rose as I crashed into the ground.

An acute pain ran through my body.
The monster let out a triumphant roar which resembled laughter. It was distasteful to the ear.

Yet again, the cuts didn't heal. Once, twice, thrice——the Blood Ogre stomped incessantly, demanding the answer.

He stomped over and over again, enraged, swollen with fury.

……Whatever it was trampling must be in a miserable state by now.

As if to confirm whether what it was trampling had died or not, it raised its foot amidst the twirling cloud of dust.

「——Hey, you're in the middle of a battle yet you're laughing like an idiot. Even for a moment, you can't take your eyes off the target of your attacks. Just now, you got your left wrist cut……You're so poor and pitiable, aren't you?」

Gazing at the figure of the person who was stepping on its shoulders, the face of the Blood Ogre distorted into an incredulous expression.
Even if it made such a face, it wouldn't stop the sword which had already been brandished.

「——What happened……? Smile, ogre.」

With my hand having received a positive feedback——the battle came to a conclusion.

Jumping off the collapsing Blood Ogre's shoulders, I rushed back to everyone.
When the female adventurer, who had taken refuge in the back, saw that the battle had ended, she ran to me, gratified.
As soon as everyone has been treated, we will finally leave the forest.

There was no conspicuous wound on Lim.
Although she seemed to be in pain due to physical overexertion recoil, she would wake up after a while.
Treatment was required for Bays-san and Arnold-san, though.

「I can treat me myself……Arnold-san is in more critical condition, please attend to him first.」

Even if you tell me to attend him first, there is nothing much I can do.

「Sorry……Seiji, there's a medicinal drug in my leather rucksack. Can you please take it out?」

Upon the request of Arnold-san, who had broken his arm, I struggled my hand into the leather rucksack and fished around. I found the medicinal drug and had Arnold-san chug it down. Thereafter, his erratic breathing calmed down.

This medicinal drug was the same as the one I bought in Merville town. It was neither cheap nor expensive.
It was effective against a range of injuries but by no means could it heal a fractured arm in

an instant.
The medicine used by Bays-san for treating himself was the same type.

Because the bleeding in the leg had yet to stop, I took out the change of clothes from my rucksack to make up for the bandage. Before bandaging, I soaked it in another medicinal drug. After dabbing it on the wound, I tied it tightly.
According to Sheena-san, it was more effective than drinking it in case of an external injury.
As for the fractured arm, the female adventurer used a twig as a makeshift splint.
By the way, there's an expensive medicinal drug which can instantly heal any injury but I have yet to see it.

——Presently, there didn't seem to be any danger.
After the treatment was done, we decided to leave the forest and return to Pascam.
That said, we will soon have to apologize to Batteau-san jointly.

「Seiji-san, since you took great pains, you should strip the horn of the Blood Ogres. It's quite an expensive material.」

Ooh, I forgot.

「Both of them are yours.」

Although the first one was slain by everyone……since Arnold-san and everyone were nodding, I obediently obliged.

I somehow cleft the red horn of the first monster. However, the blackened horn was excessively hard, so I couldn't cleave it. Is the material of a monster which possesses a rare enhancement skill rare, too?
Now that it has come to this, I'll take it by all means.

Ah, *ping* an idea.

If I can't cut the horn……I can simply crush everything but the horn.

Sheathing the sword, I picked the club up and trotted to the Blood Ogre.

「Funnuaaaaaaa!」

So heavy……It doesn't suit me……I'll just lift it to the height where it can be swung down from.

「Sei! Nooooooo」

I aimed at the head which was lying on the ground——……Warning: Gore.

——Now that the horns have been collected, let's return.
Bays-san, albeit slightly numb, was able to walk by himself; the female adventurer was carrying Lim, who was still unconscious, on her back; and I lent my shoulder to Arnold-san.

En route, Arnold-san whispered a question to me.

「In the battle with the last Blood Ogre……Seiji's movement was exceptional. Did, whatever you tried, yielded the effect?」

Err, did I say such a thing?
Ah~……I blurted something unnecessary out, it seems.

However, there's no way I can tell him about my skill.
I can't tell anyone about such an inhumane act as stealing skills without any regard. It's not a matter I can thoughtlessly talk about with others.
By no means do I think that Arnold-san is blabbermouth but I don't feel any need to intentionally tell him in particular.

「A person who practises martial arts has tremendous potential for growth if they know how to grasp the opportunity……」

Is he perhaps talking about 'breaking through the barrier'?
Albeit not entirely, he's correct.

That's right……Although he's unable to wield a sword right now, I'll have to return his Sword Arts skill to him before he gets suspicious.

There's an option to return the skill, isn't there?
I concentrated my consciousness, albeit nervously, for it was my first time attempting it.
N? Huh, did nothing happen?

Hey, don't tell me that it's impossible to return the skill!

No, wait. Don't be hasty.
That it's required for the hand to be in physical contact while stealing, it should be the same in case of returning, too……shouldn't it?

Because I was already lending a shoulder to him, I touched him without seeming unnatural.
Un……It went well.

When I concentrated my consciousness, I felt a strange sensation of something warm moving through my body.
In terms of image——it was like clay.

The quantity that belonged to Arnold-san was torn off from the total quantity.
……Ah, shouldn't I keep the Sword Arts skill until we safely reach Pascam?
If the 1 in 10,000 chance of another Blood Ogre appearing did come to pass, it wouldn't be funny.
I withheld the portion which I was in the process of returning.

However, when I return it, my Sword Arts skill will be back to being Lv2.
I'd better not rashly say「ehh, I broke through the barrier.」

Therefore, to Arnold-san's question——

「When I wished that I didn't want everyone to die in front of me……I felt an enormous power burning inside me. I thought I'd try it and see as to how far I could go by myself.」
「Fumu……」

「——As for me, I was curious when Seiji-san wasn't affected in the least even after you were drenched in the blood of the Blood Ogre. Another thing which piqued my interest was the strange phenomenon that occurred in the body of the second Blood Ogre.」

Abruptly, someone whispered into my ear. It was precisely Bays-san who had bent backward in order to lean closer.

「……About the Blood Ogre's unusual phenomenon, how can I possibly know? As for the paralytic poison, I'm sure it has something to do with my constitution.」
「I see. You're so young, yet- did you receive any special training? You were also under attack and received several wounds……」

……Eeh, yes. From the caterpillars.
But I can't say that out loud.
Now, what do I make up for Vitality Enhancement……?

「I was the first to ask question. Also, you don't bother your savior with questions, you thank them, examiner-dono.」
「True. I was just asking out of curiosity. However——」

Although he was not wearing his glasses for they had broken, Bays-san still gestured as if fixing his glasses.

「——You slew the Blood Ogre single handedly. Even Sheena, who believes that you are promising, would be surprised if she knew.」

Aah……I somewhat feel like seeing that face.

——Thus, we safely reached Pascam port town.
I want you to make me a new weapon out of the horn I obtained, Jig-san!

1st Volume, 15th Chapter【The Chat】

Because it was quite long, I have divided it.
What follows is a continuation of the conclusion.

By the way, I have revised a part about returning the skill.

Also, Arnold-san has ceased to possess Cooking skill. The skill has now been transferred to Lim. It won't have any impact on the main storyline. I apologize for the inconvenience. (Author's note)

——5th month, 2nd week, the day of the Dark. Clear weather.

It was a seemly time of broad daylight.
Pascam port town was filled with the noise of wharfed ships and bustling people.
However, it felt incredibly peaceful after having fought to death in the forest awhile ago.

The adventurer duo, who had returned and reported to the guild, were waiting at the entrance to the town, worried. When they saw the figure of the woman accompanying us, they broke into cheer and ran up to us.
It was an emotional reunion.
I was of the thought that they would hug each other. However, before their bodies could lock together, a Liver Blow was executed. (TN: Frequently used technique in boxing)

「How dare you guys leave me behind? Is that your 'resolve'?」
「H-How could you say that? You may not know but while you were missing——Moberaa!」
「We were so frantic——Zeppurya!」

Trying to hide your embarrassment, eh? While spectating such a warm communication, we entered Pascam.
The three bowed deeply as they bade their farewells……No matter how you looked at them, they seemed close.

By the way, I have returned Arnold-san's Sword Arts skill awhile back. His injuries, however, have yet to heal.
We rented a room at an inn and lied down to rest. We decided to hire a healer.
Although I haven't had the opportunity of acquiring their services, there exist people with the occupation of healing injuries via magic. As to what kind of magic skill they possess has piqued my unremitting interest.
My palm *niginigi* moved reflexively.

「Then, I'll go and report to the guild. If it's fine with you, Seiji, I want you to come with me.」
「Eh? Ah, okay.」

Lim had already regained consciousness. It also seemed safe for her to move; however, she

wanted to stay by Arnold-san's side.
Hence, the two of us, Bays-san and I, headed to the guild.

——When I stepped into the Adventurer's Guild, the ambience ensuing inside was unlike the hustle and bustle of the port town outside.
zawazawa Chatter would be more appropriate word.

Meanwhile, Bays-san proceeded to the reception and called out to a male staff member.

「Excuse me, I'm a staff member of the Merville Guild, Bays. Has the information in regard to the Blood Ogres appearing in the vicinity of the Pascam Highway been circulated?」
「Yes, we have already contacted the Pascam Garrison. An urgent quest has been published for adventurers ranked B or above. Do you have any new information in relation?」

Somehow, the Blood Ogres showing up in the vicinity of the Pascam Highway is highly exceptional. It has been quite long since they last came out of the great forest. They normally inhabit the wasteland. A pair setting out of their habitat has seldom happened.

In a close relationship, they moved to a new home after taking great troubles; however, no sooner did they set foot in a new world, they lost their lives……rest in peace.

……Listening to the content of Bays-san's and the staff member's conversation, my understanding deepened.

「——So, the Blood Ogres really were subdued.」
「Eeh, Seiji-san……do you have the horns of the Blood Ogres?」

Aah, is that why you brought me along?
These horns can serve as both the subjugation proof parts and the materials.
I placed the two horns, which I was keeping in my leather rucksack, on the counter.

「One of them seems to have changed in color, however……they are certainly the horns of the Blood Ogres. It may be rude of me, but……」

Having inferred what the vague words of the staff member meant, Bays-san replied with a smile.

「They are undoubtedly the horns of the Blood Ogres from the report. In capacity of a staff member of the guild, I guarantee it.」
「Very well. Then, I'll pay you the reward.」

I thought I wouldn't receive the reward for I didn't subjugate the Blood Ogres subsequent to receiving the quest.
Besides, it was a high ranked quest which I couldn't receive by rights.
Oh well. It shouldn't be that big a problem as the guild imposed the restriction in order to entrust the quest to an adventurer with requisite level of ability. Now that I have already killed the Blood Ogres, trust shouldn't be a concern.

I showed the guild card for verification.

「Rank……E+……!?」

……There does seem to be an issue.

「E-Everyone joined forces to kill them?」
「That's……possible, certainly.」

Initially, he seemed dubious but was eventually convinced that I subdued them genuinely and didn't inquire any further.
Had I looked like Arnold-san, would the correspondence have been different?

The client was the Pascam Garrison.
The reward was 1 gold coin per monster——a total of 20,000 Dalas, that is.
It was quite high.

As Bays-san wasn't eligible, I would hand out the beastkin family's half later.

「The horns of the Blood Ogres can be sold to the guild. Take them to the materials trading counter if you wish to.」

With this, my duty was over.
Behind me, who was heading toward the materials trading counter, Bays-san and the staff member were still engaged in the conversation.

It wasn't likely for another Blood Ogre to exist beside the pair. Still, it was necessary to search the forest along the Pascam Highway in order to secure it. People travelling through the Pascam Highway were being cautioned in cooperation with the Pascam Garrison. The matter seemed serious in more ways than one.

「Excuse me, how much would you buy this horn for?」
「It seems to be the horn of the Blood Ogre reported awhile back. As for its condition…… there doesn't seem to be any problem. We'll buy it for 15,000 Dalas. Huh……? This horn's color……」

After examining the blackened horn for a while, the oneesan staff member stared at me.

「This black horn……seems to be harder compared to that of an ordinary Blood Ogre's. How about 20,000 Dalas?」

Umu. It's indeed quite a sum. However, 5,000 Dalas for all the troubles I took just doesn't cut it.

「……Umm, what kind of use does this horn has?」
「It's mainly procured by the blacksmiths. From what I understand, it gains the property of a metal upon heating; therefore, it's used in weapons and armors.」

I……see.
Then, I'd rather like to keep it than selling it.
Upon returning to Merville, I'll give it a try at a certain place.
For now, should I be content with selling the red horn then?

Thereafter, Bays-san and I turned our steps to the trading firm.
The reason being, we had to give a detailed account to Batteau-san.

When we met each other in the trading firm, Batteau-san, as expected, didn't criticize our actions.
When he said that it was immensely beneficial for him to be on good terms with a promising adventurer, I could only awkwardly smile.
After a few words of apology, we discussed the future plan.

According to Bays-san, the forest along the highway was being searched thoroughly for caution's sake, so we'd rather depart tomorrow.
Batteau-san agreed to it, too.

——I returned to the inn, opened the door to the room and checked up on Arnold-san.
The healer was in the midst of the treatment, so I leant against the wall in order not to disturb them.

The treatment of his injured leg seemed to have completed. His fractured arm was being healed now.
The palms of the healer started to light up as the fractured part began to glow.
Fumufumu……《Light Magic Lv2》, huh? I hardly have any knowledge about magic; however, there seems to exist such a thing.

As for my next plan of action……since my Sword Arts skill had reverted back to Lv2, I would like to raise it back to Lv3. When I did, I would have reasonable assurance of protecting myself in peril.
Considering my current physical abilities, Lv3 would just about do.

In order to raise the skill to Lv4 or above, I'll have to level the Physical Abilities Enhancement skill up in conjunction.
There must exist a monster like Bal somewhere. (※It must be noted that Bal is a human)
I'll search for it once I return to Merville.

That said, it's a world of swords and magic——Iris.
Having just the sword would be boring.
Now that magic is being used right in front on my eyes, I'll use it, too, and take over the world……nn, I'll just leisurely travel around the world.
As for magic, I plan on learning (stealing) it in the future.

While I was thinking over such things, the treatment was over.
Arnold-san moved his arm, which should've been fractured, without any trouble.

What a magic~.

Was what I shouted in my heart; however, I, whose injuries had healed automatically due to Vitality Enhancement, was the last person to say that.

Lim thanked the healer and paid the fee, which wasn't small, out of her pouch.
Upon witnessing the desolation ensuing inside the pouch, an expression of unease floated up her face.

Without missing the timing, I set the gold coin on my thumb and aimed at the pouch.

「Lim, this is half the reward for the Blood Ogres we killed.」

Having said so, I flicked the thumb.
Once……I wanted to try it just once. Just once.
However, the coin flew in the wrong direction. No sooner, a dull clang echoed off the floor.

……

……

At that moment, my face turned red. Even more so than when I confronted the Blood Ogres.
I picked up the gold coin, which was still rolling on the floor, and handed it to Lim.

「Umm, thanks. For helping Papa……and me.」

……N? Does she retain the memory from her berserk state?

「Do you remember facing the Blood Ogre?」
「Yes, vaguely.」
「I see. I was almost hit by Lim~. It was so scary~.」

Lim's white skin flushed red. Her erect ears *petan* drooped, so did her tail which was about to swipe the floor.
……Did I go overboard with the joke?

「At that time……my head went blank……that's why……」

Aah, so she wasn't aware herself that she went berserk.
When I put my hand on Lim's head and pat, her drooped cat ears *washiwashi* wavered.

「Oh well. It's fine, isn't it? Because Lim was there to buy time, I was able to prepare…… prepare my mind. That everyone has returned safe and sound, it's OK.」

As her eyes regained the shine, her delighted face turned to me.
When I looked into her pretty golden eyes, they seemed to carry a surprisingly gentle warmth which was nowhere there when I first met her.

I wonder if I were of some help to this girl.
For a girl ladened with a tragic past to smile like she did, I think I was.

If the word were out……nah, it's foolish talking about ifs.

「If I were in danger like Arnold-san, would Lim be just as riotous?」
「Err……what do you mean by that?」
「I wonder what I meant.」

It would be unreasonable for her to.

「Well, the chat ends here. We'll be departing tomorrow is what has been decided. Till then, everyone is free to spend their time resting or however they like. It's General Batteau's order.」

I conveyed the message to everyone in a jest and turned to the door in order to tour Pascam.
At that moment, Lim grasped my hand, which was on her head, and stared at it fixedly.
Thereafter, her earnest eyes looked into mine.
Eh? She seemed somewhat shy.

「Seiji……somehow……」

「……」

「You look like my mother.」

「——No, I'm not your mother!」

Arnold-san, who was spectating quietly from the side, burst into a loud laughter.

Riot Grasper Chapter 16

1st Volume, 16th Chapter【The Warm Welcome】

Finally, 1st volume ends.
Although it was tiring……I'm feeling satisfied. (Author's note)

——5th month, 2nd week, the day of the Light. Clear weather.
Before the sunset.
We safely arrived in Merville town, bade farewell to Batteau-san and underwent the formal procedure of promotion.

As for the result, all three of us passed.
Although Batteau-san included whatnot in the feedback, there was no issue with the escort quest itself. According to Bays-san's revelation,「in case of a complaint, an adventurer below rank B may be demoted to rank E」.

「——So, you broke my precious baselard just like that.」
「……I'm sorry.」

And so, here I am in front of a grim bearded dwarf, Jig-san——who's demanding an explanation.
He shot these words at me after witnessing the blade of the sword which had snapped from the base.
I was trembling.

「Then, what do you want from me?」
「Umm……this……」

I fearfully took the horn of the Blood Ogre out and put it down.

「I'll be glad if you make me a new sword with this, I think.」
「So, now you bring your own material and want an order made sword. Didn't you so brazenly say that you were a novice adventurer? Didn't I give you the baselard the other day because you said that you weren't proficient at using any weapon? Did you lie to me?」
「I've just been promoted……to rank D-……」
「Aah?」

I'll just buy an available for sale sword. I apologize for being impertinent.

「But……it's an authentic horn of a Blood Ogre. Moreover, being an odd variant, the quality of the material is excellent. So, the story of the battle with the Blood Ogres really was true.」
「……Yes.」
「Show me your hand.」

He grabbed my arm and stared at my palm for a while.
No sooner he released me, he threw a suitable sword available at the shop.

Since there was no hostility, I took it as a permission and practice swang a bit.
I slashed with all the power the current me could muster.

「……Fumu……oh well. Looks fine.」
「Eh, can I keep it?」
「Don't misunderstand! You're just a young bird that has yet to grow. It just means that I'll make you a sword, so don't get ahead of yourself!」
「T-Thank you very much.」

Inside my head, it went like this,『d-don't misunderstand. It has only just begun, so don't be hasty☆』I banged my head on the table to delete it.

「……What the heck are you doing!? So……what kind of a sword do you want?」
「A black and hard sword, please!」
「Wha……t?」
「A black, hard and cool sword, please!」
「That's not what I meant! The material is already black and it's hard, too! What I mean is…… should it be a single handed sword or double handed? Single edged or double edged? And, what should the length of the blade of the sword be?」

After having calmed my excitement, I reflected on what I just babbled out and agonized in my mind.

「I-I'm sorry. Normally, I use only one hand; however, I would be grateful if I could use both hands if needs be. Edge……make it single edged, please. Length……should be appropriate for my height.」

As to why I chose single edge, it's because it would be useful if I were to fight a human.

After I placed my order, Jig-san measured the height of my body. Right then, I recalled something important which I had forgotten.

「Umm, Jig-san……what will be the price……」
「Aah, I totally forgot……on the contrary, how much will you pay me?」

Hey, returning a question with a question is a foul play!
If I quoted an inappropriate price, he might refuse to forge.
How much? How much will be appropriate?

E-Ei! I don't have time to think. Take however much you want!

Don! I put my pouch on the table .
That's to say——

「——That's all I have. It may not be enough, but……」

It may indeed not be enough. There are as little as 30,000 Dalas inside.
Although I brought the material with me, there are a lot of items in Jig-san's shop the price

of which far exceeds easily.
Once again, I'm in debt……

At such an answer, Jig-san approached me quickly.

「Even though my skill is too expensive to buy……」

Without looking at the contents of the pouch, Jig-san laughed heartily, seemingly satisfied with my answer.
After receiving the payment from the pouch, Jig-san tossed 1 gold coin to me.

「——Umm, this……?」
「It's a congratulatory gift. After all……you have promoted to rank D-, haven't you?」

Yes, I have. Don't make me cry~

————————————

——On the verge of crying, I returned to Feeder Pops' and took a seat in the dining area on the first floor.

By the way, I had already turned up to Dario-san a while ago.
Since I returned one full day later than planned, in order to relieve their worries, I acted all uppity. Because of that act, there would be a modest celebration with everyone here in the dining area.

When I conveyed to the rest of us three, who were promoted, that Dario-san would be putting all his effort, they were enthusiastic.
They were quite excited.

「Huh? Just Arnold-san? Where's Lim?」
「She left her seat just now. She'll probably come back right before it starts.」
「Ah, okay.」

A few minutes later, Dario-san and Flower-san brought the disher over one after another.

All the dishes which Dario-san had made thus far were absolute gems.
However, the items he lined up tonight were so extravagant that they exceeded by far. Although I was feeling sorry for Lim, I couldn't hold my chopsticks back.
With Sword Arts skill in full throttle, I stabbed the knife I was holding into the meat. After cutting a mouthful, I moved immediately to the next dish.

I shook my fork into the salad, which was lavishly filled with cheese and vegetables, and covered with oil fried flake shaped pastry. Its aroma fragrant and texture mouth watering.

「Kuha! It's tasty. Pops, another cup of booze.」

While Arnold-san and I were immersed in the gluttonous galore, the lid was blown off

something which looked like a dessert.
I remember it……isn't it the fruits pie from that time?

Disregarding such a concept as 'after meal dessert', I tossed it into my mouth.

……N? This is……not bad.
But……why does it taste different?
Did Dario-san meet failure?

「How is it?」

For Dario-san was pressing for my impression with a beaming smile, I gave my honest opinion without reservation.

「Actually, it……doesn't taste like Dario-san's usual……oh well. It's natural to fail once in a while.」

In response, a somewhat puzzled look floated up Dario-san's face.
Don't tell me he has the glass heart of an owner! If that's the case, then I'll immediately——

When Dario-san shifted his body with a *sui* swish……there stood……Lim.
Dunno why my body was trembling as I stood up.

「O-Ou. Lim, where were you? Why don't you have a seat and eat with us?」
「I made……that……」
「……Eh?」

Sorry, I don't know what you're talking about.

「That fruits pie. It was so delicious……that I had Dario-san teach me and made it myself.」

Wha……t?

As for Lim's expression, I couldn't tell for she had her head drooped.
Wait- wait a minute! What did I say earlier!?
When Dario-san solicited my impression……then——

——'It's natural to fail once in a while,' is what I said. Teehee *pero*☆

Uoaaaaaaaaaa!!

「No, it's not like that! Yeah, I thought it was made by Dario-san; hence, I said so. As for general evaluation, it would be 'delicious'.」

I make excuses, flustered.
While I was speaking, I heard some sound. When I turned to the source of the sound, Arnold-san, who was sitting across from me, stood up with one of his hands on his sword.

「Seiji……Let's go outside. Since it's a full moon night, I'll have to show you my true self.」

「No! No- no- no! I know that Lim put in all her effort to make it. You know it, too, Arnold-san. Please don't be so angry!」

The dining area was filled with clamor. Amidst the explosive situation——came the sound of the door opening.
「Oh, I came here to congratulate you, but……why is it so noisy inside?」
「Seiji-san, everyone, congratulations on your promotion.」

Bays-san and……Sheena-san!?

「Since it's time for the change of shifts, we stopped by for a bit……」
「Ah, thank you very much. Both of you, please have a seat. Dario-san, the bill is on me. Please bring the dishes *janjan* non stop.」

I grabbed Lim's arm, who was still standing, and forced her to sit.

「You, too, Lim. Sit here and eat all you want. It's okay……Lim, you have reached the level where you can make terrific dishes.」

It wasn't a lie for she had Cooking skill.

「……Un」

「You, too, Arnold-san. Please sit down. You seem to be pretty drunk because you were downing alcohol *dondon* so quickly.」

When everything somehow calmed down, I finally took a breather and looked around.

Fuu……that was so scary.

——However, I really am indebted to everyone.

The Dario couple needn't be mentioned. The two guild staff members, the beastkin father and daughter, Batteau-san, who's not present, and Jig-san who'll be making me a sword.

Although I have spent but a short time in this world……that I'm able to harbor such feelings is owing to these people around me.

Un, not bad.

Not half bad——this world.

Such were my thoughts while looking at everyone's jubilant visage.

The dishes were brought over until everyone's stomach was jampacked as the merrytime continued till late night.

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